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Coming February 2011 Issue.
See It On Newsstands December 28.

Volume 90, No. 1 January 2011

The Ring Goes Digital

So many superb print publications have become extinct, Wikipedia has to update its list of "demised magazines" every couple of months. It's not just American icons, such as *Life, McCall,* and *Gourmet* that have vanished. The rot has reached all the way to the fringe, where *Cracked* (*Mad*'s only worthy competitor in the 1950s and early '60s), *National Lampoon*, and *Vibe* have also gone out of business.

The Ring, however—a specialty magazine, even at its highest point—is still here, still alive, a truth that is self-evident by the fact you are reading these words.

It's rather amazing when you think about it: a print publication, founded in 1922, still publishing every month. I believe there are many reasons why The Ring has survived, so many, in fact, that to discus them here would be impractical. We'll leave that story for another time.

What is of immediate importance is that there are exciting changes afoot for The Ring and it's loyal readers, changes that will give the publication a fresh look and a state-of-the-art method of delivering its unparalleled contents.

The February 2011 issue, which goes on sale the last week of December 2010, will have undergone a redesign, featuring bold new graphics and several innovative, interactive departments that will give readers greater involvement in the magazine.

Even more significant is the launch of a digital edition of The Ring, also know as a virtual magazine.

The contents of the digital edition will be exactly the same as those contained within the paper edition, but readers will also be able to access it on their computer, iPad, iPhone, and Droid browsers via RingTV.com.

The digital edition of the February issue will be provided free of charge and will remain on our website so that potential customers will be able to experience the results of this thrilling new technology first-hand.

Starting with the March 2010 issue, *all subscribers to the traditional paper magazine will also receive the digital edition as a free premium along with the paper edition.* There will also be the option of subscribing to just the online version.

One of the problems that has haunted all monthly magazine since the very first one rolled off the press is what is known as the "lag time," which is the number of days between an event and the magazine arriving in your mailbox or local retail outlet. The online edition of The Ring will enable readers to get the latest issue at least two weeks sooner than ever before in the history of the publication.

The Ring has been through many changes over the last nine decades, but we're not just giving the venerable publication a new paint job. This time we're embracing the challenging world of the new media by combing the best of boxing journalism with ever-evolving marvels of the digital word. RingTV.com was the first step in that direction, having both a paper and online version of the magazine is the next.

But rest assured, The Ring's commitment to provide insightful, comprehensive, and unbiased coverage of boxing, which has made it the leader in its field since its inception, will remain unchanged.

Fights and fighters is what The Ring is about—always has been, always will.

The only difference will be that the digital edition will bring the contents to life online in a groundbreaking new format. Stay tuned for more details in the February issue.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

The Ring

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[Opening Shot]

Exception To The Rule

Keeping your hands up to protect your face is one of the first things a boxer learns, but, as challenger Rendall Munroe discovered in his bout with WBC super bantamweight titleholder Toshiaki Nishioka, it doesn't always work. Nishioka's ability to penetrate Munroe's hands-high defense was a major key to winning a 12-round decision and retaining the title.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

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PHOTO BY JEFF FUSCO/HOGANPHOTOS/GBP

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Rebirth Of A Legendary Gym

Much has changed in the 50 years since a brash young kid by the name of Cassius Clay first came to the 5th Street Gym in Miami Beach to train with Angelo Dundee. Clay would change his name to Muhammad Ali, shake up boxing, and become the most recognized man in the world. Dundee, who has trained 15 world champions, became one of the most famous and well-respected trainers in the history of boxing.

The South Beach area of Miami Beach, where the original 5th Street Gym was located, went from a rundown, seedy neighborhood to one the country's trendy party destinations. Ali, now 68 and struggling with the effects of Parkinson's disease, no longer "floats like a butterfly." Dundee, still active and full of vitality, recently turned 89 years old. One thing that hasn't changed is the special bond between these two men.

On September 23, Muhammad Ali returned to Miami Beach to help his friend and former trainer celebrate the grand opening of the new 5th Street Gym. Angelo, his son, Jimmy, and partners Tom Tsatas, Matt Baiamonte, and Dino Spencer have reopened the gym, mere steps away from where the original gym once stood.

A packed house was on hand for the VIP gathering, which included such boxing luminaries as Bert Sugar, Emanuel Steward, Ferdie Pacheco, Ed Brophy, Shannon Briggs, Pinklon Thomas, Tommy Morrison, and many others.

When Ali entered and sat in a reserved section at the back of the gym, the crowd erupted in a chorus of "Ali, Ali, Ali," The champ looked up and smiled briefly, obviously still moved by a chant he'd heard countless times before.

Angelo Dundee followed his older brother, legendary fight promoter Chris Dundee, to Miami Beach in the early 1950s. Chris had moved from New York to Miami Beach to promote fights at the Miami Beach Auditorium and needed a gym to groom and supply fighters for his weekly fight promotions. He and Angelo converted an empty space above a drugstore at 5th and Washington Avenue. Thus was born the 5th Street Gym.

Often called the University of Boxing, the 5th Street Gym flourished for approximately 30 years, into the late 1970s. It was not uncommon to have several world champions and titleholders training there at the same time, Carmen Basilio, Willie Pastrano, Luis Rodriguez, Jimmy Ellis, Sugar Ray Leonard, and, of course, its most famous alumni, Ali. Others

Dundee cuts the ribbon along with Miami Beach boxing commissioner Deede Hawthorn, Suzanne Dundee Bonner (Angelo's daughter), and Miami Beach Mayor Matti Herrera Bower

PHOTO BY JEFF JULIAN

Dundee inside the "new" 5th Street Gym

PHOTO BY JEFF JULIAN

who trained there at one time or another during its fabled history include a who's who of boxing greats: Sugar Ray Robinson, Rocky Marciano, Archie Moore, Willie Pep, Joe Louis, Sonny Liston, Kid Gavilan, Roberto Duran, Jake LaMotta, Joey Giardello, Carlos Ortiz, and Ezzard Charles.

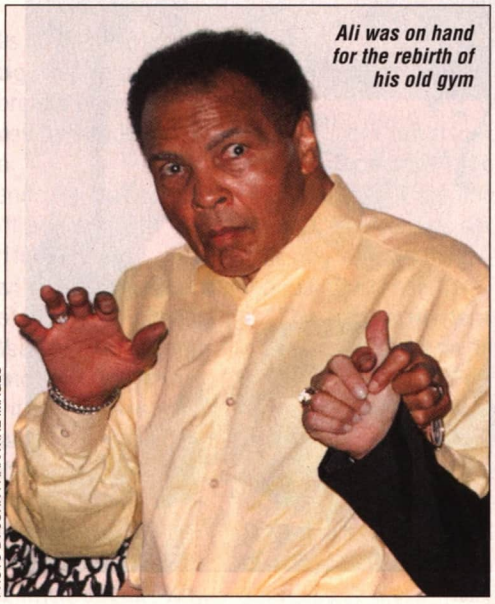
The gym itself became a tourist attraction and was a magnet for Hollywood celebrities and sportswriters. Visitors included the likes of The Beatles, Frank Sinatra, Jerry Lewis, Jackie Gleason, Malcom X, Sylvester Stallone, Joe Namath, and Howard Cosell. The gym gained worldwide attention in the time leading up to the first Cassius Clay-Sonny Liston heavyweight championship fight, in 1964, as hundreds of reporters climbed the rickety steps of the gym to observe and file their stories.

The building began to disintegrate in the late 1980s, and Chris eventually closed the gym. Several others subsequently tried to keep it alive, but with no success. The building was demolished in 1993.

Chris Dundee died in 1998 at 91. A new structure was built on the site in 2002, and a plaque honoring the historic gym was unveiled there in 2006.

Just blocks from the heart of trendy South Beach, the new 5th Street Gym will primarily be a boxing gym, hoping to again lure world-class fighters to train there. In order to keep up with the times and make it financially feasible, the gym will also offer MMA training and various workout classes for the general public.

Although Dundee plans to spend as much time as possible at the new gym, the primary trainers will be Matt Baiamonte and Dino Spencer. Baiamonte studied under Angelo for almost 10 years and will utilize his methods and styles. Dino, who trained under Freddie Roach, has been a successful martial arts instructor in the Chicago area for 25 years. Both Matt and Dino have also worked with many high-profile clients in the entertainment industry and other sports.



Ali was on hand for the rebirth of his old gym

PHOTO BY JOHN PARA/WIRE IMAGES

Tom Tsatas is a successful businessman as well as boxing promoter and manager. He is the entrepreneurial mastermind behind the revival of the 5th Street Gym. Angelo's son, Jim, will be involved with the gym's memorabilia, licensing, and merchandising.

Although the clean and bright new gym might not have the same gritty atmosphere of the original, many hope it will carry on its legacy and create and cultivate future champions. Like South Beach, boxing has changed over the last 60 years, but the history and spirit of the original 5th Street Gym will live on in its reincarnation.

—Jeff Julian

The Fighter: A Reel Depiction

"I'm a little disappointed that there was nothing in it about Gatti, but the movie is really good."

Micky Ward was talking about *The Fighter*, a new film from Paramount Pictures that depicts the early years of his life. It opens nationwide in December, with Mark Wahlberg as "Irish" Micky and Christian Bale taking the role of Micky's half-brother, Dickie Eklund.

"It's pretty accurate in a roundabout way," Ward told THE RING. "It's about us, two brothers, and all we went through, especially Dick, with the drugs, and prison, and the family turmoil."

Is it odd to see such unattractive details of one's life depicted on screen?

"It is, but that's how it happened. I think back to that time and how we survived. It's a miracle."

How this movie survived is also a miracle, as it underwent several contractual problems, legal battles, and changes in personnel since the project was first announced in 2003. At different times, Matt Damon and Brad Pitt were scheduled to play Eklund, while the original director was Darren Aronofsky, who helmed *The Wrestler* in 2008. *The Fighter* finally came together under the direction of David O. Russell, who had directed Wahlberg previously in *Three Kings* and *I Heart Huckabees*.

PHOTO BY JOJO WHILDEN

Mark Wahlberg, as Micky Ward, gets instructions from Christian Bale, who portrays Dick Eklund

Ward is quick to point out that *The Fighter* did not rely on Bob Halloran's biography, *Irish Thunder: The Hard Life And Times Of Micky Ward*, a book Ward describes as "a lot of hearsay."

"None of the quotes were from us," Ward said. "Halloran just went by what other people said. The movie, it's all from me and Dick. We told them the story. They changed some things to make it more appealing, but we had input."

The word from Hollywood insiders is that Bale's depiction of Eklund is a tour de force.

"This is the second time Dick has had to watch his life," said Ward, referring to a 1995 HBO documentary called *High On Crack Street: Lost Lives in Lowell*. "Maybe it's a little uncomfortable for him, but Dick's doing good now." Ward added, "Christian Bale did a great job, and he's a great person. So are Mark Wahlberg and Amy Adams, who plays my wife."

Ward even approves of the fight scenes, describing them as "real good." Ward's bout with Shea Neary for the WBU belt is treated as the film's climax. Only a clip that plays as the final credits are rolling acknowledges Ward's legendary bouts with the late Arturo Gatti.

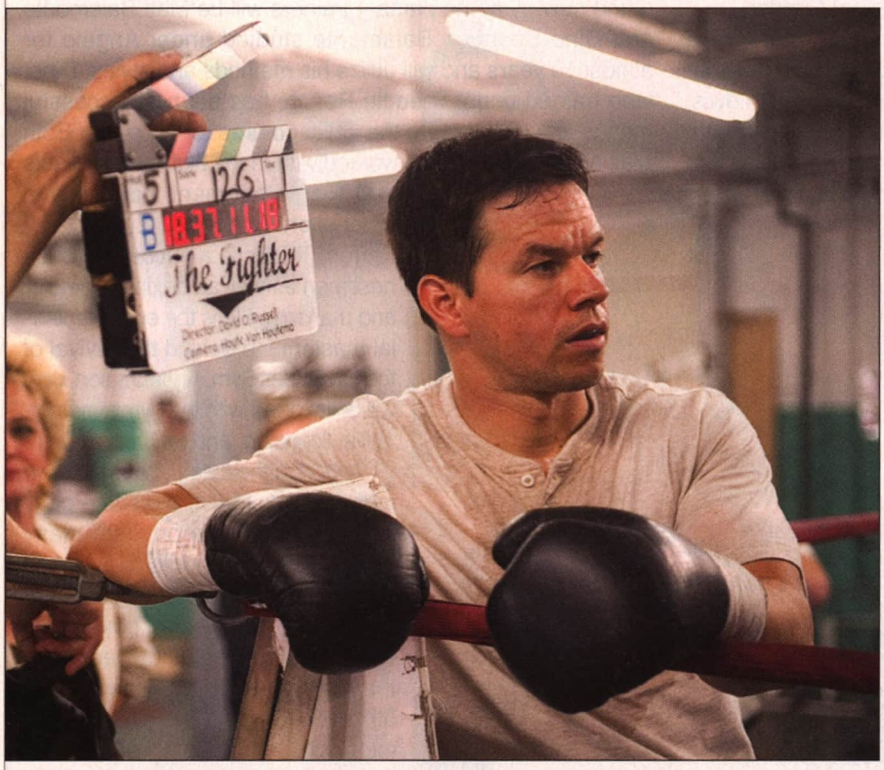


PHOTO BY JOJO WHILDEN

***Wahlberg between takes on the set of* The Fighter**

"I kind of wish Gatti was in there, but the movie is more about our family," said Ward. "The moral of the story is that Dick and I were able to overcome our problems, and reunite, and go to England so I could fight for the WBU title."

The Fighter is arriving on the heels of a dozen years' worth of boxing movies, both fictional and nonfictional, including *Cinderella Man*, *Resurrecting The Champ*, *Million Dollar Baby*, *Rocky Balboa*, *The Hurricane*, and *Ali*. Will the movie-going public of 2010 be interested in another boxing drama?

"We wondered about that," said Ward. "But I think people will like it."

A final question: If someone wanted to learn about Micky Ward, should they watch the movie, read the book, or watch a DVD of Ward's fights?

"I'd probably say the DVD of my fights," said Ward. "I'm not taking anything away from the movie, but, in my fights, I gave it my all every time."

—Don Stradley

Boxing Bookshelf

Although each novel is set in its own specific era, Budd Schulberg's *The Harder They Fall* and W.C. Heinz' *The Professional* are timeless evocations of ring lore and tradition that should be read more than once to mine the rich veins of insight and immemorial truth they contain. Published in 1947 and '58, respectively, there's still nothing brittle or hoary in them.

Next to these literary heavyweights, *The Bruiser* (The Kent State University Press, 272 pages, soft cover, $19.95) is a lightweight at best. But the reissue of the Jim Tully novel first published in 1936 is welcome nonetheless because even though it is old-fashioned, one-dimensional, predictable, and sometimes so melodramatic as to be cornball, it's still an awful lot of fun.

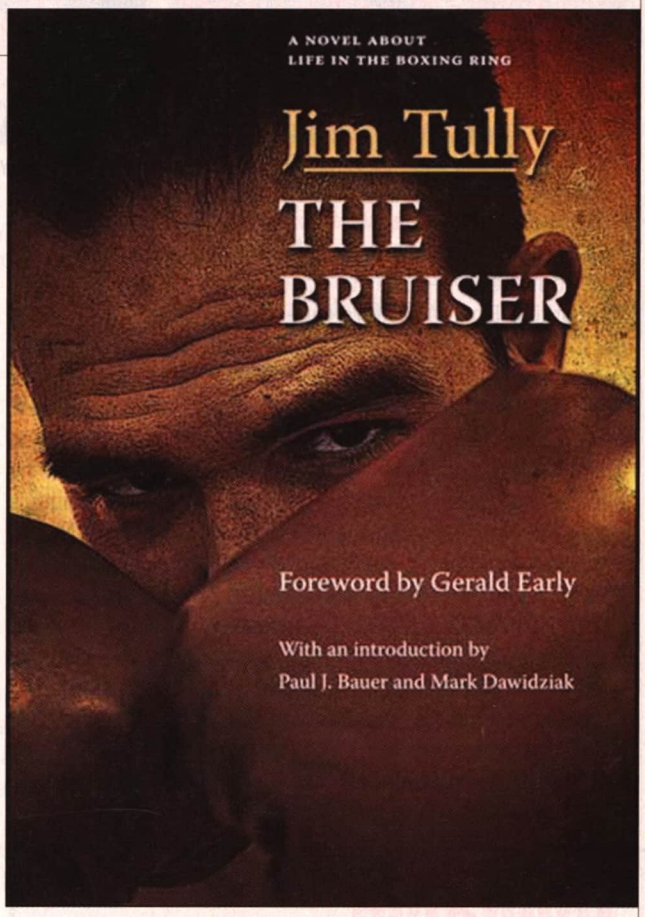
Tully was a hobo-turned-writer who did some boxing himself when he was on the bum and drew on both experiences to create his protagonist, "Roaring" Shane Rory, hobo-turned-heavyweight with "cyclones in his gloves," on whose road to glory he encounters the kinds of headaches, heartaches, and travail that must've kept audiences on the edges of their chairs back when *The Shadow* had folks glued to the Philco between Fireside Chats. But now they seem as contrived and clichéd as the name of one of Tully's characters, a hooker called "Dilly Dally."

Lots of Tully's characters are dillies, including good-hearted heavyweight champ Bangor Lang, who "majored in chemistry at a university" and, after he breaks Rory's jaw in their non-title draw, cures him of the blues by sending over the autobiography of Helen Keller.

Tully was very proud of the fight scenes he crafted, but they can be summed up in this line about one of them: "Uncountable blows, the neighbors of death, followed."

So what's to like about this old chestnut? I give you "Silent Tim Haney," Rory's manager, a man not above employing larceny on behalf of his fighter because "guiding a man to a heavyweight championship was more delicate than assembling a watch." The only thing Silent Tim dislikes more than dames—"When a fighter takes a broad, it's like takin' the other guy's manager in his corner"—is boxing writers.

"All you have to do is wring the diapers of your mind," he tells "Hot and Cold Daily," the biggest byline in boxing journalism, "and you get paid for it—and the boobs read your pother as though you knew what you were writin' about—why,



you're nothin' but a lookin' glass—and all that's in you is the thoughts and doins' of bigger and braver men."

(Daily had it coming. "If you get stuck in describin' the rounds," he counsels a rookie reporter before the final big fight, "just say any old thing—nobody has 'em right anyhow—and the rest don't care.")

The Bruiser made a big splash back in the day. Damon Runyon hymned it as "the greatest story of the ring ever told." Gene Tunney said, "From a pugilistic point of view, it is almost perfect." (Highbrow Gene must've skipped over the part where Silent Tim decries slicksters like him as "a lot of sunken-chested fairies [who] flit about with gloves.")

Jim Tully slugged the keys of a typewriter like he was punching a heavy bag. Great literature it ain't, but the racket is diverting if not very euphonious.

—Pete Ehrmann

Outside the Ropes

Former heavyweight contender **Joe Mesi**, 37, has been appointed to the New York State Athletic Commission. Mesi will be assigned to work in upstate New York, overseeing the commission's rules and regulations, physicals, and payments to boxers. "I am honored to be appointed to a great commission," said Mesi. "This will keep me close to the boxing game that I love so much" ... Junior featherweight **Wilfredo Vazquez Jr.**, the **WBO**, and **All Star Boxing Inc.** have joined forces to provide a $1,000 scholarship to a high school senior in each of five school districts on Osceola County, Florida. Students who participated had a minimum of 2.5 GPA and submitted a 750-word essay on the history of boxing ... Undefeated **Nathan Cleverly**, THE RING's fifth-ranked light heavyweight contender, has relinquished the European 175-pound belt in order to concentrate on world honors. The British Boxing Writers recently selected the 23-year-old Cleverly as Young Boxer of the Year. "I'm delighted and honored to have won," said Cleverly. "Britain has some of the most knowledgeable journalists in the world when it comes to boxing, and their backing is a terrific boost" ... According to *The Manila Bulletin*, scam artists, attempting to cash in on the phenomenal popularity of **Manny Pacquiao**, tried to smuggle goods into the Port of Manila allegedly consigned to a Manny Pacquiao foundation. Customs officials became suspicious and impounded the shipment after an investigation proved that the so-called foundation was fictitious ... Bantamweight titleholder **Fernando Montiel**, 31, was injured in a dirt bike accident in Alamos, Mexico, on October 10. He suffered a severe cut on his right leg and was advised to stay off the leg for at least three weeks ... The German Boxing Association has suspended referee **Matthias Eichler** due to his handling of a September 26 bout in Berlin between junior welterweights **Boris Berg** and **Matt Zegan**. According to the GBA, Eichler was intimidated by a hostile crowd and announced that Berg was the winner, when the official verdict was a four-round draw ... **Bobby Dunlap**, who worked as a boxing trainer at the Denver Athletic Club for more than 20 years, died of a heart attack in early-October. The 52-year-old Dunlap gave his final boxing lesson the night before he died. "I've been at the club for 15 years, and this is the saddest day I've worked." said the health club manager, **Max DeHerra** ... Restaurateur **Murray Wilson**, 72, the manager of former WBA junior middleweight titleholder **Yuri Foreman**, died of a heart attack on October 13 ... Former amateur boxer and trainer **Don Thibodeaux**, 69, died in Detroit on October 8. According to boxing writer **Bob Ryder**, Thibodeaux boxed on the same Detroit Golden Gloves team as **Emanuel Steward**, and the pair worked together during the early years of Kronk Gym dynasty. During his time with Kronk, Thibodeaux worked the corner of such outstanding fighters as **Thomas Hearns** and **Hilmer Kenty**. After leaving Kronk, he helped train **Tony Tucker** and **Hector Camacho**. Thibodeaux was also a talented artist, best known for a statue of **Muhammad Ali** made out of car bumpers and other auto parts. Sadly, Thibodeaux suffered from a variety of aliments the last few decades of his life, including heart trouble and diabetes ... Former British, Commonwealth, and European bantamweight titleholder **Alan Rudkin**, 68, collapsed on the street of his native Liverpool and died on September 22. Rudkin turned pro in May 1962 and won the British and Commonwealth 118-pounds titles with a 10th-round TKO of **Johnny Caldwell** in March '65. Rudkin had three world title shots, losing a 15-round decision to **Fighting Harada** in November '65, losing a split, 15-round decision to **Lionel Rose** in March '69, and getting knocked out by **Ruben Olivares** in December '69. Rudkin bounced back to capture the European bantamweight title in February '71 with an 11th-round TKO of **Franco Zurlo**. Rudkin had his final fight on January 25, 1972, when he successfully defended the British and Commonwealth titles with a 15-round decision over **Johnny Clark**. Rudkin retired due to eye problems at the age of 30 after compiling an overall record of 42-8 (15).

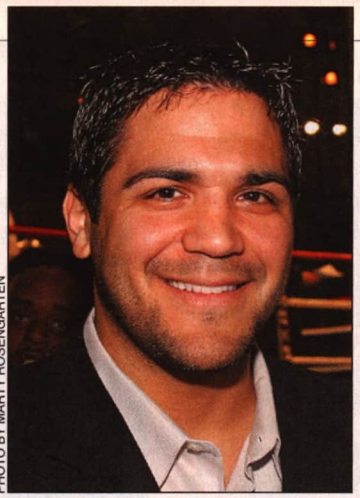
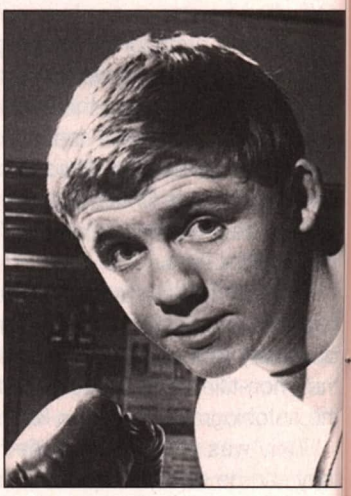


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Mesi: Appointed to NYSAC



Rudkin: Dead at age 68

Quotable

"I know that when I sit down and watch a UFC show I'm going to get five or six competitive, quality match-ups. You'll be lucky to see two of those if you go to your average boxing event. That's why I'm a UFC fan."

—WBA heavyweight titleholder David Haye explaining why he's a MMA fan

"It's great to work with him. When you're running with him, when you're training with him, it gives me an extra push, makes me train harder because I know Manny's training hard. I wanna copy Manny so it's like I like to be his shadow."

—WBA junior welterweight titleholder Amir Khan, explaining the benefits of training alongside Manny Pacquiao

[Ratings Analysis]

For Period Ended October 24, 2010

Heavyweights: No changes.

Cruiserweights: Denis Lebedev (sixth last issue) moves to five, trading places with Zsolt Erdei (fifth last issue), who drops to six because he has not fought since his decision-victory over Giacobbe Fragomeni in November 2009. Erdei's inactivity looks like it will change since signing with American promoter Lou DiBella. Erdei stays in the ratings because, as this magazine went to press, he stayed within the one-year limit of inactivity with a scheduled fight against journeyman Samson Onyango on the undercard of the Paul Williams-Sergio Martinez fight in November.

Light Heavyweights: No changes.

Super Middleweights: No changes.

Middleweights: No changes.

Junior Middleweights: No changes.

Welterweights: No changes.

Junior Welterweights: No changes.

Lightweights: No changes.

Junior Lightweights: No changes.

Featherweights: No changes.

Junior Featherweights: Toshiaki Nishioka (second last issue) moves to one after Roy Li Lee's stunning upset over Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym (first last issue), who drops to three. Lee enters at two, forcing major reshuffling. The realignment forces down everyone rated three and below to fall one slot, with the exception of Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. (eighth last issue), who moves up to seven, and Rendall Munroe (sixth last issue), who drops three places to nine. Lee's inclusion pushes out Akifumi Shimoda (10th last issue).

Bantamweights: No changes.

Junior Bantamweights: No changes.

Flyweights: Luis Concepcion (sixth last issues) trades places with Denkaosan Kaovichit (fourth last issue) and moves to four, after Concepcion's first-round destruction of Kaovichit, who falls to six.

Junior Flyweights: Former number-one rated strawweight Roman Gonzalez enters the junior flyweight class at 10, propelled by his second-round stoppage of Francisco Rosas. The two met at strawweight, and Rosas had given Gonzalez his only real challenge in over two years of holding THE RING's number-one strawweight slot. Gonzalez replaces Johnriel Casimero at 10.

Strawweights: With Gonzalez (first last issue) leaving to fight at junior flyweight, everyone rated two and below moves up one place each, making way for Wanheng Menayothin to debut at 10.

Pound-for-Pound: No changes.

The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

Pound-For-Pound

1. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Welterweight
2. **Floyd Mayweather**
   Welterweight
3. **Juan Manuel Marquez**
   Lightweight
4. **Nonito Donaire**
   Junior Bantamweight
5. **Paul Williams**
   Middleweight
6. **Sergio Martinez**
   Junior Middle/Middleweight
7. **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam**
   Flyweight
8. **Fernando Montiel**
   Bantamweight
9. **Wladimir Klitschko**
   Heavyweight
10. **Timothy Bradley**
    Junior Welter/Welterweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to **ringtv.com**

The Ring Ratings

For Period Ended October 24, 2010

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at ringtv.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

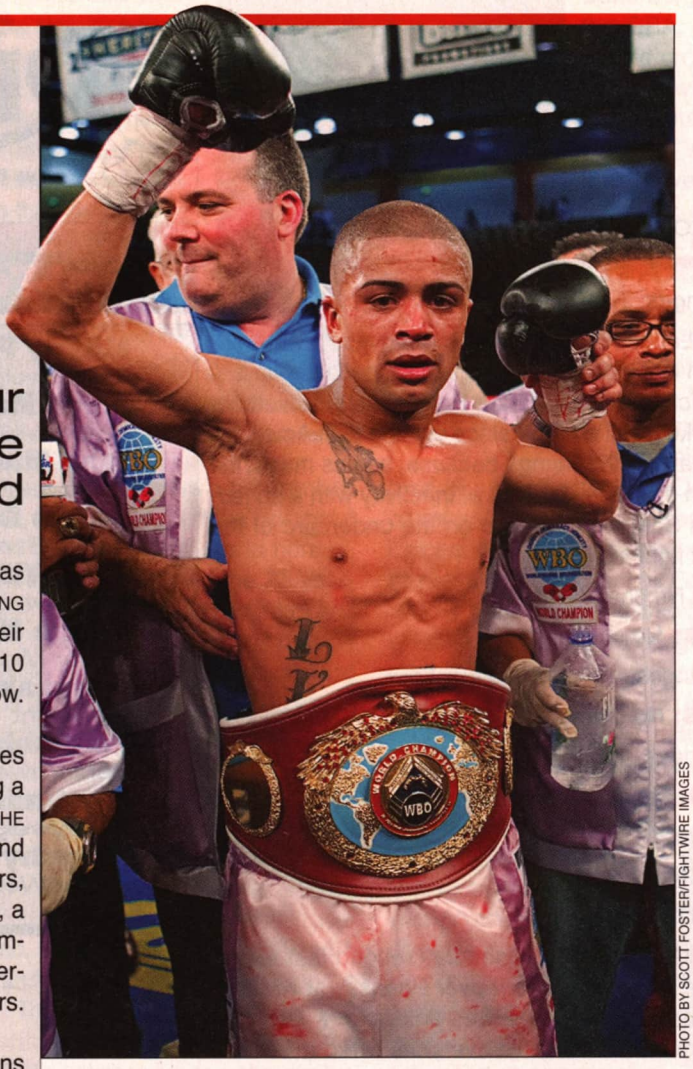


PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. keeps on rising at junior feather, moving now to seven

Heavyweights

Weight Unlimited

Champ: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 55-3 (49)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 41-2 (38)
2. **DAVID HAYE**
England 24-1 (22)
3. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia 20-0 (15)
4. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 42-1 (27)
5. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan 26-1-1 (17)
6. **EDDIE CHAMBERS**
Philadelphia, PA 35-2 (18)
7. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia 27-0 (22)
8. **NICOLAY VALUEV**
Russia 50-2 (34)
9. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**
Ukraine 30-1 (20)
10. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
Riverside, CA 29-2 (25)

Jr. Middleweights

Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina 45-2-2 (24)
2. **KERMIT CINTRON**
Reading, PA 32-3-1 (28)
3. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
Mexico 19-1 (16)
4. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 35-2 (28)
5. **RYAN RHODES**
England 44-4 (30)
6. **SECHEW POWELL**
Brooklyn, NY 26-2 (15)
7. **YURI FOREMAN**
Belarus 28-1 (8)
8. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
Armenia 28-0 (17)
9. **SERGIY DZINZIRUK**
Ukraine 37-0 (23)
10. **CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE**
Detroit, MI 30-4 (18)

Featherweights

Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN**
Indonesia 43-0-2 (22)
2. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
Puerto Rico 29-0 (26)
3. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
Cuba 19-0 (15)
4. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
Mexico 34-11-2 (22)
5. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
Mexico 40-2 (33)
6. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ**
Mexico 39-12-2 (23)
7. **ELIO ROJAS**
Dominican Republic 22-1 (13)
8. **BERNABE CONCEPCION**
Philippines 28-4-1 (15)
9. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 39-5 (35)
10. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
Mexico 46-7 (40)

Jr. Featherweights

Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 37-4-3 (23)
2. **ROY LI LEE**
Japan 17-1-1 (8)
3. **POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM**
Thailand 41-2 (29)
4. **STEVE MOLITOR**
Canada 33-1 (12)
5. **RICARDO CORDOBA**
Panama 37-2-2 (23)
6. **JEFF MATHEBULA**
South Africa 23-2-2 (13)
7. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.**
Puerto Rico 20-0-1 (17)
8. **SATOSHI HOSONO**
Japan 16-1 (12)
9. **RENDALL MUNROE**
England 21-2 (9)
10. **MASAAKI SERIE**
Japan 15-4 (6)

Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 43-2-2 (33)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO**
Panama 30-1-1 (10)
3. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA**
Japan 28-3 (12)
4. **YONNHY PEREZ**
Colombia 20-0-1 (14)
5. **ABNER MARES**
Mexico 20-0-1 (13)
6. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
Ghana 27-2 (22)
7. **NEHOMAR CERMENO**
Venezuela 19-2 (11)
8. **SASHA BAKHTIN**
Russia 25-0 (11)
9. **ERIC MOREL**
Madison, WI 42-2 (21)
10. **MICHAEL DOMINGO**
Philippines 40-14-2 (18)

Cruiserweights

Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM** Philadelphia, PA 23-2 (12)
2. **MARCO HUCK** Yugoslavia 30-1 (23)
3. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK** Poland 44-2-1 (32)
4. **TROY ROSS** Canada 23-2 (16)
5. **DENIS LEBEDEV** Russia 21-0 (16)
6. **ZSOLT ERDEI** Hungary 31-0 (17)
7. **DANNY GREEN** Australia 30-3 (27)
8. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI** Italy 26-3-1 (10)
9. **OLA AFOLABI** England 15-2-3 (6)
10. **PAWEL KOLODZIEJ** Poland 26-0 (15)

Light Heavyweights

Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: JEAN PASCAL Haiti 26-1 (16)

1. **CHAD DAWSON** New Haven, CT 29-1 (17)
2. **TAVORIS CLOUD** Tallahassee, FL 21-0 (18)
3. **GLEN JOHNSON** Jamaica 50-14-2 (34)
4. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Philadelphia, PA 51-5-1 (32)
5. **NATHAN CLEVERLY** Wales 20-0 (10)
6. **ADRIAN DIACONU** Romania 27-2 (15)
7. **KARO MURAT** Iraq 22-1 (13)
8. **BEIBUT SHUMENOV** Kazakhstan 10-1 (6)
9. **CHRIS HENRY** Houston, TX 25-2 (20)
10. **GABRIEL CAMPILLO** Spain 20-3 (7)

Super Middleweights

Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **LUCIAN BUTE** Romania 27-0 (22)
2. **ANDRE WARD** Oakland, CA 22-0 (13)
3. **MIKKEL KESSLER** Denmark 43-2 (32)
4. **CARL FROCH** England 26-1 (21)
5. **ANDRE DIRRELL** Flint, MI 19-1 (13)
6. **SAKIO BIKA** Cameroon 28-4-2 (19)
7. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM** Armenia 31-1 (25)
8. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ** Germany 38-2 (23)
9. **LIBRADO ANDRADE** Mexico 29-3 (22)
10. **BRIAN MAGEE** Northern Ireland 34-3-1 (24)

Middleweights

Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: SERGIO MARTINEZ Argentina 45-2-2 (24)

1. **FELIX STURM** Germany 34-2-1 (14)
2. **PAUL WILLIAMS** Augusta, GA 39-1 (27)
3. **KELLY PAVLIK** Youngstown, OH 36-2 (32)
4. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER** Germany 33-3-1 (16)
5. **MATTHEW MACKLIN** England 27-2 (19)
6. **DANIEL GEALE** Australia 22-1 (13)
7. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK** Germany 30-0 (10)
8. **ROMAN KARMAZIN** Russia 40-3-2 (26)
9. **DMITRY PIROG** Russia 17-0 (14)
10. **DAVID LOPEZ** Mexico 39-12 (23)

Welterweights

Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** Grand Rapids, MI 41-0 (25)
2. **MANNY PACQUIAO** Philippines 51-3-2 (38)
3. **ANDRE BERTO** Winter Haven, FL 26-0 (20)
4. **MIGUEL COTTO** Puerto Rico 35-2 (28)
5. **SHANE MOSLEY** Pomona, CA 46-6-1 (39)
6. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY** Ghana 35-4 (20)
7. **JAN ZAVECK** Slovenia 30-1 (17)
8. **VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO** Ukraine 31-0 (20)
9. **RAFAL JACKIEWICZ** Poland 36-9-1 (18)
10. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY** Palm Springs, CA 26-0 (11)

Jr. Welterweights

Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY** Palm Springs, CA 26-0 (11)
2. **AMIR KHAN** England 23-1 (17)
3. **DEVON ALEXANDER** St. Louis, MO 21-0 (13)
4. **MARCOS MAIDANA** Argentina 29-1 (27)
5. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK** Ukraine 31-4-1 (13)
6. **JUAN URANGO** Colombia 22-3-1 (17)
7. **KAIZER MABUZA** South Africa 23-6-3 (14)
8. **PAUL MALIGNAGGI** Brooklyn, NY 27-4 (5)
9. **LAMONT PETERSON** Washington, D.C. 28-1 (14)
10. **PAUL MCCLOSKEY** England 22-0 (12)

Lightweights

Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ Mexico 51-5-1 (37)

1. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS** Australia 27-2 (22)
2. **MIGUEL ACOSTA** Venezuela 27-8-2 (21)
3. **HUMBERTO SOTO** Mexico 53-7-2 (32)
4. **ALI FUNEKA** South Africa 30-3-3 (25)
5. **BRANDON RIOS** Lubbock, TX 25-0-1 (18)
6. **JOHN MURRAY** England 30-0 (18)
7. **PAULUS MOSES** Namibia 25-1 (17)
8. **ANTHONY PETERSON** Washington, DC 30-1 (19)
9. **URBANO ANTILLON** Mexico 28-1 (20)
10. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ** Mexico 26-3 (12)

Jr. Lightweights

Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MZONKE FANA** South Africa 30-4 (12)
2. **RICKY BURNS** Scotland 29-2 (7)
3. **ROMAN MARTINEZ** Puerto Rico 24-1-1 (15)
4. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA** Japan 16-0 (13)
5. **JORGE SOLIS** Mexico 40-2-2 (29)
6. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO** Mexico 22-1-1 (16)
7. **JORGE LINARES** Venezuela 30-1 (19)
8. **VITALI TAJBERT** Kazakhstan 20-1 (6)
9. **ARGENIS MENDEZ** Dominican Republic 17-1 (9)
10. **CASSIUS BALOYI** South Africa 37-5-1 (19)

Jr. Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VIC DARCHINYAN** Armenia 35-2-1 (27)
2. **HUGO CAZARES** Mexico 33-6-2 (24)
3. **NOBUO NASHIRO** Japan 14-2-1 (9)
4. **NONITO DONAIRE** Philippines 24-1 (16)
5. **TOMAS ROJAS** Mexico 34-12-1 (23)
6. **KOHEI KONO** Japan 25-5 (9)
7. **DRIAN FRANCISCO** Philippines 19-0-1 (15)
8. **OMAR NARVAEZ** Argentina 32-0-2 (19)
9. **JUAN ALBERTO ROSAS** Mexico 32-5 (26)
10. **CESAR SEDA** Puerto Rico 19-0 (14)

Flyweights

Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM Thailand 77-3-1 (41)

1. **KOKI KAMEDA** Japan 23-1 (15)
2. **DAISUKE NAITO** Japan 36-3-3 (23)
3. **DAIKI KAMEDA** Japan 18-2 (11)
4. **LUIS CONCEPCION** Panama 22-1 (17)
5. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA** Japan 36-6-2 (17)
6. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT** Thailand 50-3-1 (20)
7. **MORUTI MTHALANE** South Africa 26-2 (17)
8. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA** Mexico 34-5-1 (27)
9. **ROCKY FUENTES** Philippines 27-6-2 (17)
10. **MILAN MELINDO** Philippines 22-0 (7)

Jr. Flyweights

Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: GIOVANI SEGURA Mexico 25-1-1 (21)

1. **IVAN CALDERON** Puerto Rico 34-1-1 (6)
2. **OMAR NINO** Mexico 30-3-2 (12)
3. **RODEL MAYOL** Philippines 26-5-2 (20)
4. **LUIS ALBERTO LAZARTE** Argentina 48-9-1 (18)
5. **CARLOS TAMARA** Colombia 21-5 (15)
6. **BRIAN VILORIA** Waipahu, HI 27-3 (15)
7. **ULISES SOLIS** Mexico 32-2-2 (21)
8. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO** Argentina 25-1 (15)
9. **RAMON HIRALES** Mexico 14-1-1 (8)
10. **ROMAN GONZALEZ** Nicaragua 27-0 (23)

Strawweights

Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NKOSINATHI JOYI** South Africa 21-0 (15)
2. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI** Thailand 34-0-1 (12)
3. **RAUL GARCIA** Mexico 28-1-1 (17)
4. **DONNIE NIETES** Philippines 27-1-3 (15)
5. **FLORANTE CONDES** Philippines 23-5-1 (20)
6. **JUAN PALACIOS** Nicaragua 26-3 (21)
7. **DENVER CUELLO** Philippines 22-4-5 (13)
8. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA** Japan 23-4 (9)
9. **MICHAEL LANDERO** Philippines 14-4-4 (4)
10. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN** Thailand 14-0 (4)

By Jeff Ryan

The Great Get-It-Right Hope

Sometimes you go to the doctor, get a thorough exam, have all of your test results come back negative, are told that you're as healthy as someone half your age, and, yet, you're still certain that something's wrong with you. It's a sixth sense, a gut feeling, or just too many symptoms to ignore. So you let some time pass and then seek a second opinion. And, sure enough, a different doctor uncovers a pinched nerve that nobody else thought to look for or an infection that didn't show up on an X-ray.

In September, I got the chance to see a number of relatives and old friends that I hadn't spoken with in a few years. Several asked me how the fight game was these days, and, to my surprise, revealed that they barely pay attention to it anymore. While none of them were ever diehard maul rats, they did follow boxing with more interest than the average mainstreamer. (We'll call these folks "super mainstreamers.") Now, though, they had no idea who wore the heavyweight crown, be it linear, alphabet, or whatever. They wouldn't know THE RING Championship Policy from an Allstate homeowner's policy.

For all these super mainstreamers know, the good hands people, Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko, might as well be fugitives in the witness protection program. David Haye? Hey, David, your popularity apparently isn't making the inroads you hope it is. Povetkin? Who's he? Adamek? Never heard of him. Arreola? When most of the guys I know want to see one of those, they go to a wet T-shirt contest, not a prizefight. So even though boxing's pay-per-view numbers are solid, there are some intriguing matchups unfolding as 2010 winds down, and Showtime is confident enough to launch another TV tournament, maybe boxing isn't as healthy as some of the test results indicate.

As is usually the case, what the Sweet Science needs most is a not-so-sweet, not-very-scientific heavyweight king who grabs the public's attention and refuses to release it even after the referee has yelled, "Break!" Hate to say it, but, yeah, someone like a Mike Tyson. (A Tyson, that is, minus the police blotter, mood medication, and issues with women.) No matter what a Floyd Mayweather or Manny Pacquiao achieve, they can't carry the sport on their backs the way a headline-hijacking heavyweight he-man can.

The next great heavyweight superstar isn't in the current top 10. Hopefully, though, he's in a gym or a sports science lab somewhere right now, pouring sweat like the sky over Southeast Asia pours rain during monsoon season. If he emerges one day, possessing enough talent to win and hold the crown for a long time (*of course* that's assuming a heck of a lot, but, for the sake of this column, indulge me), he's going

Ryan says Wladimir and Vitali are not what boxing needs

PHOTO BY STUART FRANKLIN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

to need more than just his skill set to become a megastar and lift the entire sport the way a Tyson or Muhammad Ali once did. And if anyone asked me, I'd be happy to offer a marketing plan guaranteed to launch him into the stratosphere and maybe even beyond. Here are some of my ideas:

First of all, for all of this to work, the guy has to be a devastating puncher, a merciless finisher (12-round decisions excite nobody), and white. Sorry, any of you devotees to political correctness, but that's just the way it is. We need a novelty here. There still hasn't been a white heavyweight titlist since Ingemar Johansson. Don't tell me about Gerrie Coetzee, Frans Botha, Oleg Maskaev, or anyone else in line at the alphabet soup kitchen. They were never The Man while holding their belts. And the Klitschkos don't count as white guys because, let's face it, the American mainstream isn't passionate unless it's an American white guy at the top.

PHOTO BY TED ALJIBE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

If only Manny was a heavyweight!

Before the Next Heavyweight Sensation (NHS) crushes his first half-dozen tomato cans, we have to give him a colorful nickname, preferably one that becomes a permanent part of his name, like Marvelous Marvin Hagler or Superstar Billy Graham. If our future Hall of Famer's name is, say, Joe Smith, we'll make him Assassin Joe Smith or Deadly Joe Smith. If he actually kills somebody in the ring …well, we'll cross that wobbly rope bridge when we come to it.

His best punch would also need a moniker. Johansson's right hand was "Ingo's Bingo" and Mark Breland once owned a combination called "The Cherry Tree Special." Our bum-busting big man could dub his uppercut "The Chin Chiller" or label his cross "The Nighty-Night Right." On his way to a neutral corner after flattening an opponent with it, he can simulate flicking off the light switch on the victim's bedroom wall. Trust me, ESPN will eat this stuff up.

The Next Heavyweight Sensation won't align himself with any promoter and will be owned by a corporation. Ford runs the Detroit Lions and Cablevision owns the New York Knicks and Rangers, so we'll get IBM or Apple or somebody like that to back this can't-miss proposition. And the incredibly rich ownership should be willing to lose money in order to have its star appear on free network TV. That means Saturday and Sunday matinees on CBS and NBC at first, then prime time on ABC, just like in the old days. If ABC can't afford to pay the fighter's brain trust for the rights to his bout, then the brain trust will pay ABC for the opportunity to be on at 9 p.m. on a Friday in May. That strategy will more than pay off when HBO, Showtime, and PPV come begging.

When it comes to accessibility, my advice is to straddle a tricky fence between unprecedented access and complete sheltering. For instance, the NHS will talk to his fans on Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and any other social networking site, but he won't grant interviews to the press for at least the first year or two of his career. Crazy? No, just a way of building mystique. Bruce Willis played the silence card for a while after becoming a star on *Moonlighting*, and it helped to make him a zillionaire.

If the NHS is good-looking, we'll hide his wife and three kids in order to make every twentysomething bachelorette hot for him. If he's ugly, we'll put the spouse and children front and center at every opportunity to make him more popular with the soccer moms. The NHS will wear crazy outfits, from a Bernard Hopkins-esque executioner's mask to a cape and become the first fighter in history to have his line-by-line record permanently tattooed on his back. (Hopefully no athletic commission will change his technical win to a no-contest weeks later, after the tattoo artist has completed his work.) And upon entering the ring, the NHS will grab the ring microphone out of Michael Buffer's hand and, depending on his mood, salute the troops, wish all the ladies in the arena a happy Mother's Day, or promise to break every bone in his challenger's body.

What will really make the Next Heavyweight Sensation unique, however, is that he will excel at the lost art of defense (imagine that) and will take on a top-10 contender no later than his 15th pro fight. How's that for doing things differently? Who will train him? Officially, Angelo Dundee. Even if he'd merely be a figurehead who showed up in the corner on fight night, he's the name the masses still know best.

If everyone involved with the NHS simply follows this game plan, boxing can indeed get to see its rescuer ride in one day on a white horse. Well, not literally ride in on a white horse. Although that might not be such a bad idea … ■

By Ivan Goldman

Spiritual Healing

Not long ago someone asked Top Rank's Bob Arum whether he'd consider allowing a contest between his fighter Manny Pacquiao and Andre Berto, Paul Williams, or Tim Bradley. Any of the three would be terrific opponents for Manny, but they all have the nerve to be tied to other promoters. Arum's response?

"We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars building up our fighters and publicizing them so they are pay-per-view attractions. The other promoters don't really promote their fighters. They take money from HBO or Showtime or a little Indian casino and they think they are doing the kid a big service. I'm not going to give them a free ride on the work we have done."

This is why Arum is arguably the most successful promoter out there while I'm just a pitiful boxing scribe. Because if you'd asked me, I probably would have said it's the fighters, not the publicists and backroom guys who do all the serious heavy lifting.

But I bow to the wisdom of Arum and all the other big-time promoters who hunker down in their own dopey little city-states and don't want their fighters to tangle with anyone from outside the gates. That would force them, heaven forbid, to split some of the take with an outsider. Why? Just so the fans could see a good fight?

Maybe if we want to know who deserves the credit for sports successes, we should ask the experts—celebrity couple Frankie and Jamie McCourt, for instance. Those of us who live in Los Angeles get a running commentary on at least some of the divorcing McCourts' dirty little secrets as day after day their

Arum's spiritual guru is from the Philippines

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/AFP/GETTY MAGES

Is Chavez Junior even close to being ready for Cotto or Pavlik?

PHOTO BY RAY KASPROWICZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

legal teams quarrel over the rights to their gazillion-dollar holdings, which include seven mansions, lots of cars and jewelry, of course, and, incidentally, the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Among the juicier items to emerge from the open-court sessions was the McCourts' employment of Russian émigré Vladimir Shpunt. You thought it was wacky when Juan Manuel Marquez drank his own pee? That's nothing. Shpunt is a trained physicist who also works as a spiritual healer. Hired for five consecutive years, his job was to send positive energy to the team from his location in suburban Boston.

Shpunt admitted he knew little about baseball but did attend a Dodger game once. The McCourts each blame the other for hiring him, but neither denies he was on the payroll. They won't divulge what they paid him, but he received at least a six-figure bonus when the Dodgers made the National League playoffs in 2008. You know, it's impossible to make this stuff up. Only real life gets this daffy. And it's so unfair! I distinctly recall sending out positive energy during parts of the 2008 season, but the McCourts didn't pay me a dime. They even made me pay full price to sit in the bleachers.

If you're anything like me and you somehow managed to gain control of a major league ball club, I bet you too would panic and fail to pay big bucks to a swami who promises to send out fantastic coast-to-coast vibes to ensure team success. Which is precisely why the McCourts own a major league ball club and we don't.

Heck, I'll bet Arum never hired a victory guru either, which may explain why he has to work for a living while the McCourts earn $2.31-million per month in salaries and perks—almost entirely on a tax-free basis—for doing whatever it is that they do. Sadly they were so distraught over the divorce and everything that evidently they neglected to hire Shpunt this year, causing the Dodgers to miss the playoffs again.

Meanwhile, Top Rank, perhaps because it was operating without benefit of a psychic healer, claimed it was looking to put Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. in against stablemate Kelly Pavlik. Then it altered course a bit and named yet another Top Rank fighter, Miguel Cotto, as a possible opponent. The Top Rank people could just be blowing smoke, but, if they really put baby Chavez in with Cotto or Pavlik, that would be the sacrifice bout, the night they offer up their carefully built attraction on the altar of reality. Sounds like life imitating *The Harder They Fall* art of novelist Budd Schulburg, whose Toro Moreno, abandoned by management, at last had to go out there and face the shock and horror of a real fight against heavyweight champ Buddy Brannen and got bravely massacred.

Does Chavez have a chance? Pitting him against Pavlik or Cotto promises to be more like Bambi versus Godzilla than Sugar Ray Robinson-against-Carmen Basilio. Still, anything's possible. I'm not saying Chavez can't fight, mind you. He's better than average. But it takes more than that to beat Pavlik or Cotto.

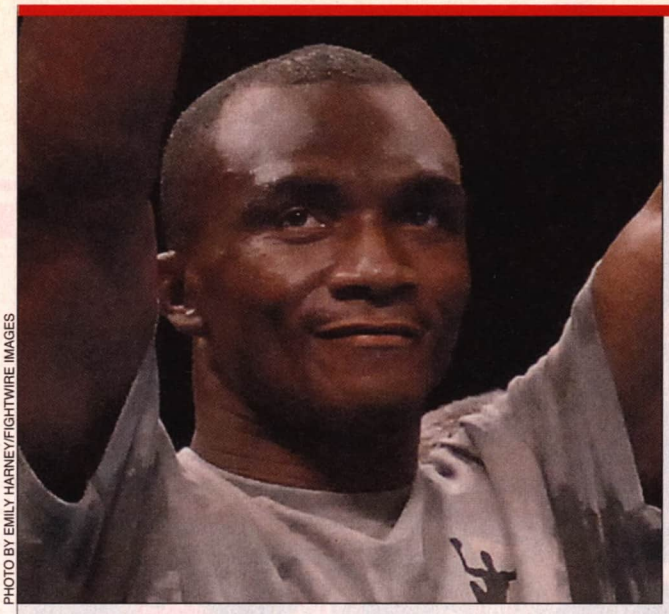


PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

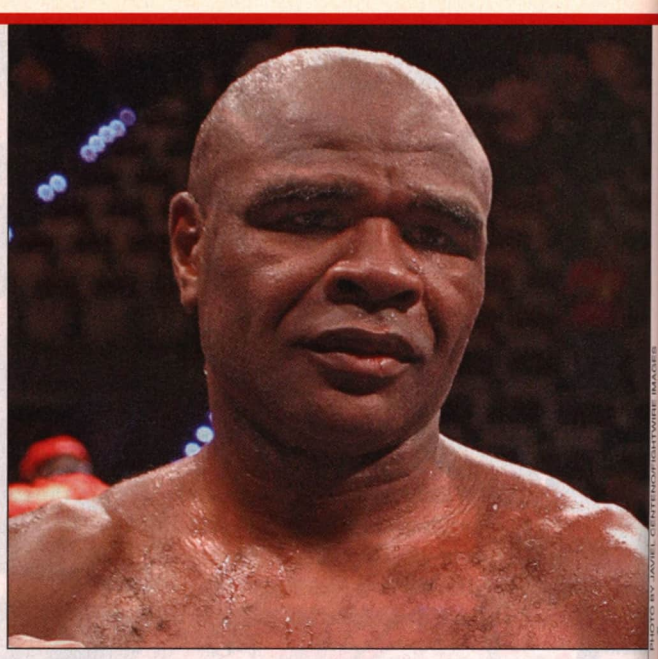


PHOTO BY JAVIER CODINA/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Can Bika and Johnson save the Super Six?

Tourney Battered: The "Super Six" tournament went just about comatose when Andre Dirrell became the third member of the original cast to pack it in, although Showtime said it plans to keep going somehow, thanks to the addition of substitutes Glen Johnson, who will fight Allan Green. Meanwhile, Andre Ward will take on Sakio Bika in a non-tournament bout. I commend the network for its perseverance. More important, let's hope Dirrell, who apparently has neurological problems, regains perfect health.

Yet another casualty of this mishap was common decency as boxing scribes swarmed all over the bad news, telling us why such a tournament could never have worked and why it was such a crummy idea in the first place. Some people say the egregious tendency to delight in the misfortune of others—what Germans call *schadenfreude*—is just part of human nature. More like hyena nature, I'd say. *Something's hurt. Isn't that grand? Let's finish it off and eat it and laugh like hyenas.*

Well, some days you walk down the sidewalk, the birds sing, and a lovely girl plants a flower in your lapel. Other days a chain snaps somewhere and a safe falls on your head.

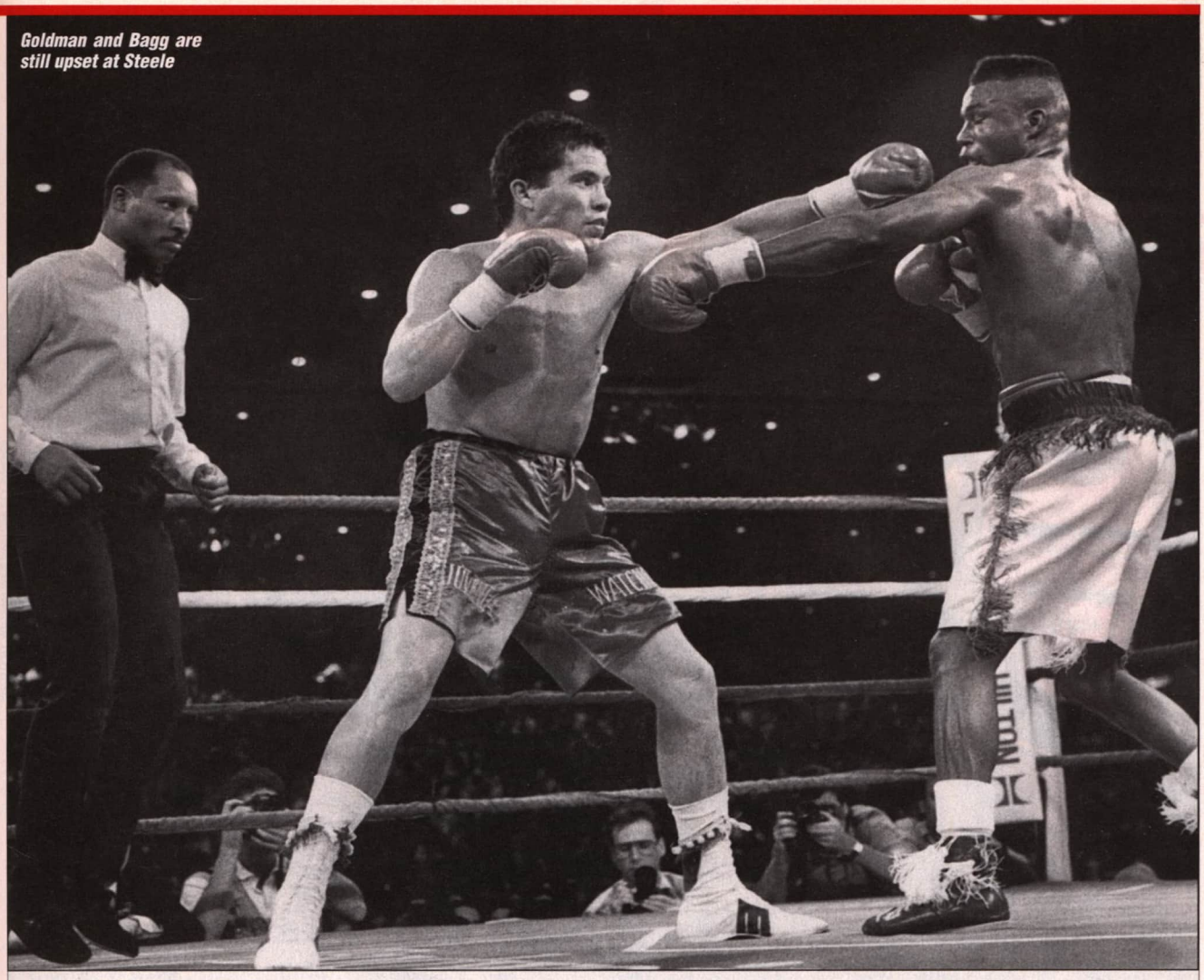
I doubt you'd be surprised if someone tells you this could be the end of boxing, a refrain we hear every 10 minutes or so. Reminds me of a nice tidbit that comes courtesy of matchmaker and boxing insider Don Elbaum. Elbaum is not only a collector of ancient RING issues, but also the *Police Gazette*, which he says was the principal magazine delivering boxing information to fans before THE RING came along in 1922.

Poster for the fight that didn't kill boxing

There's an 1892 issue of *Police Gazette* that contains an article written by Bat Masterson (that's right, Wyatt Earp's buddy) who, after James J. Corbett kayoed heavyweight champ John L. Sullivan, predicted, said Elbaum, "that this will be the end of boxing." So don't hold your breath.

A Spot for Junior: I couldn't help noticing that Jim Bagg and I both agree Arthur Mercante Jr. stunk out three or four states when he refereed the Cotto-Foreman bout in Yankee Stadium and encouraged Foreman to keep going despite a blasted-out knee. Which got me wondering: Was there still a place for me in a universe where Bagg got something right?

Then in the December 2010 issue, I learned in his column that on March 17,



Goldman and Bagg are still upset at Steele

1990, a day that still lives in boxing infamy, Bagg had money on Meldrick Taylor over Julio Cesar Chavez. I recall Richard Steele stepping in to stop the fight two seconds before the final bell as though it happened just yesterday. But the next few years are a blur. Probably because I destroyed all those brain cells banging my head against the bar in Cardiff-By-The-Sea, California, where I'd watched the fight on TV. *Yes, I also had money riding on Taylor.*

Steele's decision was like Black Friday to Taylor bettors all around the world. Some believe it swiped enough bills off the table to pay managing editor Joe Santoliquito's cheesesteak tab.

Anyway, if Bagg and I agreed on both Steele and Mercante, could this be like one of those buddy movies where the wild, crazy cop and the stiff, button-down cop are teamed up against their will by their gruff but lovable commander? Could Bagg and I, after somehow surviving 90 minutes of consecutive shootings, fistfights, double-crosses, suspensions, and a stupendous car chase, bring down the bad guys and learn to love and respect each other? Nah.

As for Mercante, he's worked hard all these years to hone his refereeing skills, and I'm not without human feelings. There ought to be a place for him in sports. What about bushkazi? That's what they call it when Afghan tribesmen play polo with the carcass of a beheaded sheep. The game, which sometimes lasts for days, could sorely use someone with Mercante's sound judgment and command presence. If he decides to check it out, he'll find hotel rooms in Kabul are a steal right now. The last tourist left several centuries ago.

Licenses "R" Us: Of course it was Texas, the state that also licenses drive-through liquor stores, that rushed in to print out a new boxing permit for disgraced plaster-master Antonio Margarito. But putting him on HBO Pay-Per-View was a mistake. He belongs on the Cartoon Network, also part of the Time-Warner global empire. Just substitute look-alike gadfly Yosemite Sam for Larry Merchant and you're good to go.

Magoos: To referee Ian John-Lewis and trainers Herman Caicedo and Eddie Mustafa Muhammad who did nothing to stop the savage bearing Shannon Briggs took over 12 rounds from Vitali Klitschko in Germany. ■

Ivan Goldman can be contacted at ivangoldman@yahoo.com.

[Camera Clicks]

PHOTO BY JAY DIRECTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Now this is the kind of break from training that Freddie Roach can't complain about. Manny Pacquiao spreads himself awfully thin during camp, but, if he's going to take part in a political or charitable activity, it might as well be something like going for a run in Manila to raise funds to help improve the heavily polluted Pasig River. (By the way, where is Manny's dog, Pac-Man, in this picture? Doesn't he always accompany the pound-for-pound king on his roadwork?)

PHOTO BY HENRY S. DZIEKAN III/GETTY IMAGES

Ladies and gentlemen, feast your eyes on this exclusive photo from the set of John Ruiz' first "how to box" training video! Actually, this is a scene from a USA Boxing open workout at Crunch Gym in New York City, where female flyweight Tyreshia Douglas correctly demonstrated what to do when the heavy-bag has you hurt.

PHOTO BY WILLIAM WEST/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

If you thought "chess boxing" was stupid, that's nothing compared to "archery boxing," the proper stance for which Patrick Gallagher demonstrates here. In actuality, Gallagher, an amateur lightweight from Northern Ireland, struck this pose in celebration of his gold medal win at the Commonwealth Games. Or maybe we have it wrong, and he was just rearing back to try to hit Nicolay Valuev on the chin.

PHOTO BY SANKEI VIA GETTY IMAGES

He might be lumped up and sweaty, but he's still Daddy. And that's good enough for Toshiaki Nishioka to get a kiss from his daughter. The number-one RING-rated junior featherweight comfortably outpointed Rendall Munroe in October to extend an impressive winning streak that is actually older than the young lady giving Nishioka a smooch.

PHOTO BY DEAN MOUHTAROPOULOS/GETTY IMAGES

Now we know where Don King gets his ideas for denim-jacket fashions. Frank Warren put together a London press conference for a card celebrating his 30th year as a promoter, flanked by top fighters Nathan Cleverly (far left) and James DeGale (far right) as well as the Pearly King and Queen (a British tradition that takes far more space than we have here to explain). All we know is none of the people in this photo have much hope of making it as Rockettes if that's as high as they can kick their feet.

By Chris Richards

Sharif Bogere Lightweight

Once upon a time, Viking warriors wore bearskins into battle. They believed that the magic of the bearskin would make the warrior part bear. The Vikings were the most feared fighters of the Dark Ages.

Sharif Bogere wears a lion's skin into the ring and is carried to his corner in a cage. His nickname is "The Lion Warrior." Seeing him fight, it isn't that hard to believe he shares many traits with his ferocious feline namesake.

"He doesn't run. He doesn't hide. He doesn't care if he gets hit. When he gets hit, he hits harder!" said co-manager Jimmy Alex.

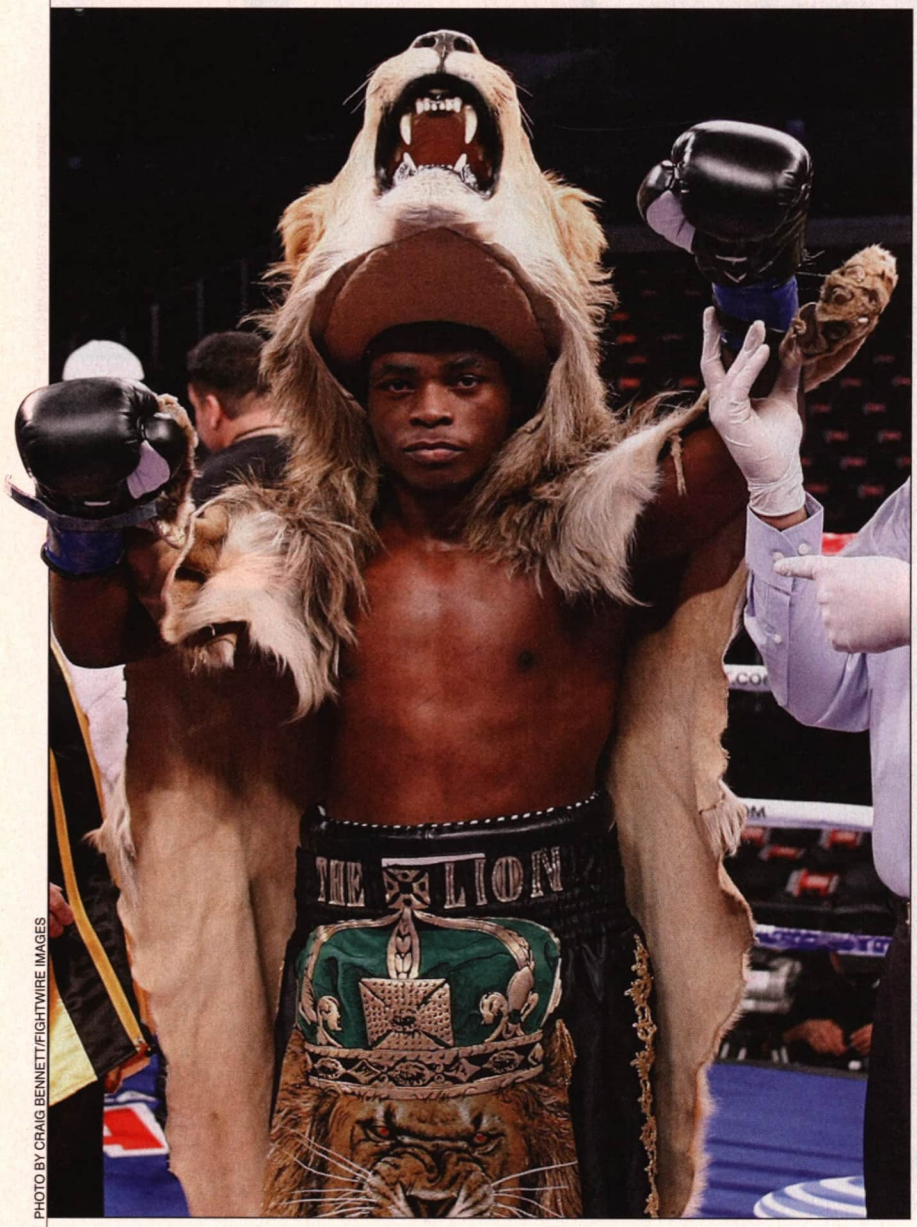


PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Pro Record

2008		
April 5	Ed Lee Humes, Mayetta, KS	KO 1
April 19	Reymundo Hernandez, St. Joseph, MO	KO 1
Sept. 19	Alejandro Lopez, Primm, NV	W 4
Oct. 31	Mike Peralta, Las Vegas, NV	W 4
2009		
Jan. 9	Manny Cotrich, Primm	KO 2
Feb. 14	Carlos Small, Primm	W 4
April 24	Courtney Landis, St. Louis, MO	KO 1
May 8	Marcos Herrera, Las Vegas	KO 2
May 16	Kevin Carmody, Primm	KO 2
June 12	Broderick Antoine, Las Vegas	W 6
July 17	Mike Gonzalez, Las Vegas	W 6
Aug. 7	Rodolfo Armenta, Primm	KO 2
Dec. 17	Cristian Favela, Commerce, CA	W 6
2010		
Feb. 26	Jose Hernandez, El Paso, TX	KO 3
April 2	Martin Tucker, Las Vegas	KO 1
May 21	Ilido Julio, Ft. Worth, TX	KO 5
Sept. 18	Julian Rodriguez, Los Angeles, CA	KO 2

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
17	17	0	0	11

Sharif now makes his home in Henderson, Nevada, a vastly different world from the boxer's birthplace of Kampala, Uganda. In Africa, the words "poverty" and "violence" take on meanings that Americans can only imagine. By comparison, the United States really is a land of opportunity, and Bogere has always been the kind of person to take advantage of whatever opportunities have crossed his path.

"There was a place where kids from different areas would come to fight," said Bogere, recalling his youth in Uganda. "We took our shirts off and wrapped them around our hands to use as gloves. Then we paired off and fought in the streets. I liked fighting. I thought it was fun.

"One day a man saw us fighting in the streets and watched us. After the fighting, he came up and asked us if we liked to fight. He took me to a boxing gym for the first time. It was really hard. No money, no equipment, we hit bags without gloves or pads. We would spar without gear."

Still, Bogere never wavered in his commitment.

(Continued on Page 110)

TWO WEEKENDS OF GREAT BOXING

DEC 11, 9 PM ET/PT

BANTAMWEIGHT TOURNAMENT

YONNHY PEREZ vs JOSEPH AGBEKO

VIC DARCHINYAN vs ABNER MARES

DEC 18, 10 PM ET/PT

WORLD LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP

JEAN PASCAL vs BERNARD HOPKINS

SHOWTIME CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING™

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THE FAB FOUR

Showtime's Bantamweight Showcase

By David Mayo

PHOTOS BY HOWARD SCHATZ/SHOWTIME

Regardless of your feelings about Showtime focusing a good deal of its boxing resources on tournaments with questionable entry fields and even more questionable formats, you can't fault the subscription network for its ardor. Despite the difficulties holding together what has become an arduous "Super Six" tournament in the super middleweight division, Showtime intrepidly pressed to pursue a similar bracket for the world's best bantamweights. When two of the most attractive potential entrants opted to fight each other instead, Showtime simply cut out two lines on the bracket and unabashedly declared that its four-man tournament would produce the real undisputed champion.

It ended up with neither a Super Six redux nor a tournament capable of creating an undisputed champion.

What it did manage was a much cleaner four-man, single elimination bracket, with two semifinals and a final. Due to the fact that a number of the contestants have fought each other prior to Showtime's tournament, the array of rematches means some preexisting bad blood. And because the bantamweight tournament should wrap up in the first half of 2011—even before the super middleweight tournament does—it creates a quick marketability boost for the winner and positions him to fight for a true bantamweight championship.

Because Fernando Montiel, the top-ranked bantamweight in THE RING's ratings, opted to fight Nonito Donaire instead, the tournament's effort to crown a bantamweight champion is rendered moot. Showtime, to its credit, seemed to follow THE RING's ratings, rather than the possessors of alphabet belts, in crafting the best possible tournament. Nevertheless, while the winner will not emerge as the undisputed champion, the ultimate winner from among four participants who will square off in the December 11 semifinals in Mexico—Vic Darchinyan vs. Abner Mares and Yonnhy Perez vs. Joseph "King Kong" Agbeko—will achieve status as the logical opponent for the Montiel-Donaire winner and enjoy months of opportunities to rail against those two for following the Top Rank promotional banner and keeping their fight in house, rather than risking their reputations in an open tournament involving multiple promoters.

The tournament winner thereby almost certainly will achieve a marketability level he has not reached previously and a rare US publicity boost in a weight division the American public typically does not heed.

In that way, Showtime's bantamweight tournament is something akin to *The Contender*—only with real 12-round fights, none of the reality-TV fluff, and most of the top fighters in the division participating—all of which is likely to propel the winner into a new strata, in a way the Super Six might not manage.

The Professional Record of ABNER MARES

2005		
Jan. 6	Luis Malave, Tucson, AZ	KO 2
Feb. 19	Francisco Soto, Los Angeles, CA	KO 5
April 29	David Vasquez, Laredo, TX	W 6
June 16	Baladan Trevizo, Fort Worth, TX	KO 5
July 16	Elvis Martinez, Las Vegas, NV	KO 3
Sept. 17	Selso Bosquez, Las Vegas, NV	KO 4
Dec. 16	Yamin Mohammad, Austin, TX	W 8
2006		
Feb. 24	Omar Adorno, Las Vegas, NV	W 8
Sept. 15	Kevin Hudgins, Chicago, IL	W 8
Nov. 25	Wilmer Rodriguez, Hidalgo, TX	KO 4
2007		
March 2	Robert Allanic, Philadelphia, PA	KO 8
April 20	Angel Priolo, Cicero, IL	KO 6
July 6	Saul Gutierrez, McAllen, TX	W 6
Sept. 7	Isidro Garcia, Tucson, AZ	KO 7
Nov. 17	Damian David Marchiano, Atlantic City, NJ	W 12
2008		
March 15	Diosdado Gabi, Las Vegas, NV	KO 2
June 27	Jonathan Arias, Cabazon, CA	W 10
2009		
May 2	Jonathan Perez, Las Vegas, NV	KO 6
Aug. 27	Carlos Fulgencio, Los Angeles, CA	KO 6
2010		
March 25	Felipe Almanza, Los Angeles, CA	KO 5
May 22	Yonnhy Perez, Los Angeles, CA (For IBF Bantamweight Title)	D 12

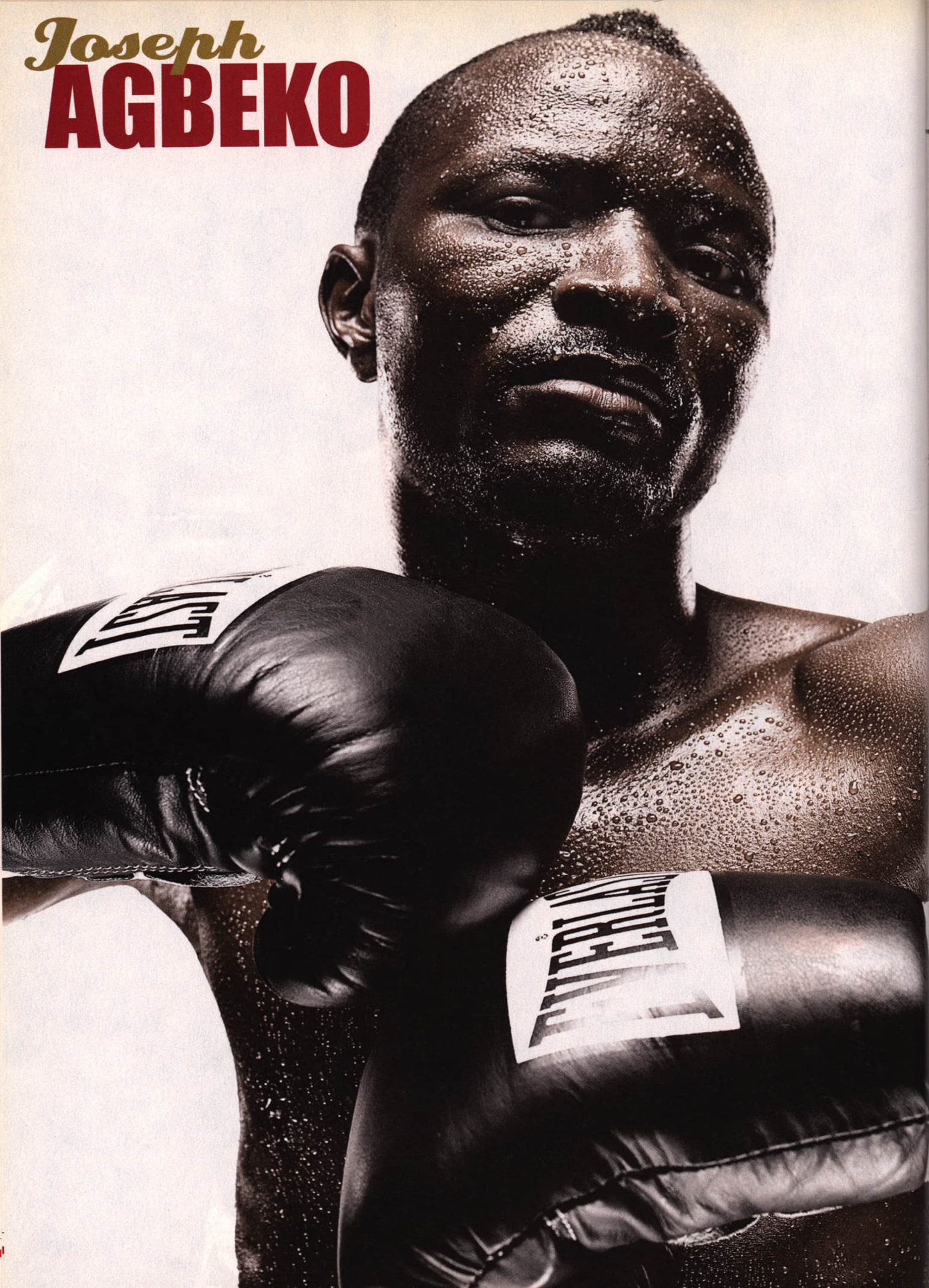
FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
21	20	0	1	13

The Super Six suffered from a convoluted effort to split the 168-pounders into competition groups, using point systems and a round-robin format in an extended effort to produce four semifinalists, with injuries and the withdrawals of Jermain Taylor, Mikkel Kessler, and Andre Dirrell causing ongoing upheaval. This, as well as constant backbiting between rival promoters over scheduling and venues, might have deterred Showtime from trying any such repeat of the tournament formula.

It didn't. Ken Hershman, Showtime's vice president of sports programming, tried to put together a similar six-man tournament for the 118-pounders. But when Top Rank expressed no interest in entering Montiel and Donaire in such a tournament when they could fight each other instead, Showtime went on without them.

Abner
MARES
CLETO REYES

Joseph AGBEKO



The Professional Record of JOSEPH AGBEKO

1998		
Dec. 16	Agaitor Yao, Kaneshie, Ghana	KO 1
1999		
March 13	Laurent Zakpo, Togo	KO 2
April 4	Ray Medoza, Cote d'Ivoire	KO 8
May 1	Roland Igbafei, Accra, Ghana	KO 2
June 4	Patrice Owai, Benin	W 6
July 30	Abdul Malik Jabir, Accra	KO 1
Sep. 19	Freddy Mutala, Senegal	KO 7
Oct. 16	Friday Fatunji Felix, Nigeria	KO 1
2000		
May 5	Ola Balougon, Accra	KO 2
Aug. 29	Laurent Zakpo, Benin	KO 2
Oct. 7	Arouma Yessoufou, Benin	KO 1
Nov. 14	Johannes Maisa, Brakpan, South Africa	W 12
2001		
March 20	Chris Bandel, Cote d'Ivoire	KO 2
March 24	Mike Orlando, Cote d'Ivoire	KO 4
May 4	Moses Kennedy, Cote d'Ivoire	KO 2
June 4	Ganiyu Olumifihon, Ghana	KO 2
July 27	Faustin Rostand, Kaneshie, Ghana	KO 2
Sep. 8	Michael Kizza, Accra	KO 2
2002		
May 10	Sabin Bornei, London, England	KO 6
Oct. 4	Agbatomey Charlemagne, Accra	KO 4
2003		
June 13	Cedric Conway, Accra	KO 6
2004		
May 18	Wladimir Sidorenko, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany	L 12
Oct. 29	Sumaila Badu, Accra	W 12
2007		
March 23	Baba Nsor, Kaneshie,	KO 4
Aug. 8	Fidencio Reyes, Las Vegas	KO 4
Sep. 29	Luis Perez, Sacramento, CA (Wins IBF Bantamweight Title)	KO 7
2008		
Dec. 11	William Gonzalez, Newark, NJ (Retains IBF Bantamweight Title)	W 12
2009		
July 11	Vic Darchinyan, Sunrise, FL (Retains IBF Bantamweight Title)	W 12
Oct. 31	Yonnhy Perez, Las Vegas, NV (Loses IBF Bantamweight Title)	L 12

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
29	27	2	0	22

The tournament boasts four fighters with a combined record of 102-4-3 and follows Showtime's boxing concept of creating the best fights for the consumer, Hershman said.

It also follows the network's new niche in creating championship tournaments in weight divisions not usually seen as particularly appetizing to the US viewing public, a twist on years past when rival HBO put together elaborate and pricey tournaments to produce undisputed champions in the popular heavyweight and middleweight divisions.

"Why tournaments? I've been asked that a lot lately, especially in light of some of the hiccups we've had with the Super Six," Hershman said. "No, I'm not crazy or some kind of masochist. I do believe the sport of boxing is a tremendous sport by itself. But I think when you overlay tournament-style rules to this sport, it becomes even that much more thrilling. Obviously, for our subscribers, keeping things innovative—keeping it new, keeping it fresh—is what we're after.

"We tried to do a Super Six with this. Two of the fighters that we wanted didn't want to participate in that style. That was fine because I think that what we're left with is actually an even more compelling concept: Two events, four fights, and we'll know who's the top guy."

Showtime might not end up with an undisputed bantamweight champion, but it should produce some intriguing boxing programming, within budget and without being particularly beholden to sanctioning bodies or promoters. Of the major alphabet bodies, only the IBF, which recognizes Perez as titleholder, is involved. Half of the fighters—Perez and Darchinyan—are promoted by Gary Shaw. Agbeko is promoted by Don King, who pushed for his participation. Mares, who is itching for a shot at Darchinyan, is promoted by Golden Boy.

The potential for a huge marketability boost in a relatively short period of time and a format that guarantees three of the four fighters will win at least once (a third-place fight is scheduled between the semifinal losers on the same night as the tournament championship) made the tournament particularly attractive.

That so many of the participants have fought each other before only adds to the story lines.

For the 30-year-old Agbeko, 27-2 (22), to win the tournament, he very well may have to do it by defeating two men he has faced previously. He opens against the 31-year-old Perez, the Colombia-born California resident who defeated him on a unanimous decision in 2009, a fight marked by a headbutt that helped Perez score a late knockdown. Agbeko has not fought since.

Accusations that Agbeko leads with his head are almost inevitable as the tournament build-up begins, with Darchinyan complaining that a series of early head clashes in his close-but-unanimous 2009 loss altered his fight plan against Agbeko, a Ghanaian who fights out of New York. That loss was Darchinyan's

first true bantamweight bout in seven years. He went back to 115 pounds after that loss and now moves back to 118 for the first time since.

"Always, I can remember my fights, what I did first round, second round, but, about that fight, I can't remember anything," Darchinyan said of their first fight, which Agbeko squeaked out by scores of 114-113 (twice) and 116-111. "When the headbutts came in the first round, I'm not saying it wasn't a mistake. Of course, it was a mistake. If I let him headbutt me, it's my mistake, but I was not thinking the whole fight."

Shaw defended both his fighters, saying that the one thing in common between the Agbeko-Darchinyan and Agbeko-Yonnhy Perez fight was headbutts.

"Darchinyan took, I think, 44 stitches against Agbeko, and Yonnhy Perez got all cut up against Agbeko," Shaw said. "So we've got to hope that Agbeko learns and fights with his gloves this time, not his head."

Agbeko defended himself on the issue, saying, "I don't headbutt. In the fight with Darchinyan, he was coming in on me. And in the fight with Yonnhy Perez, he butted me."

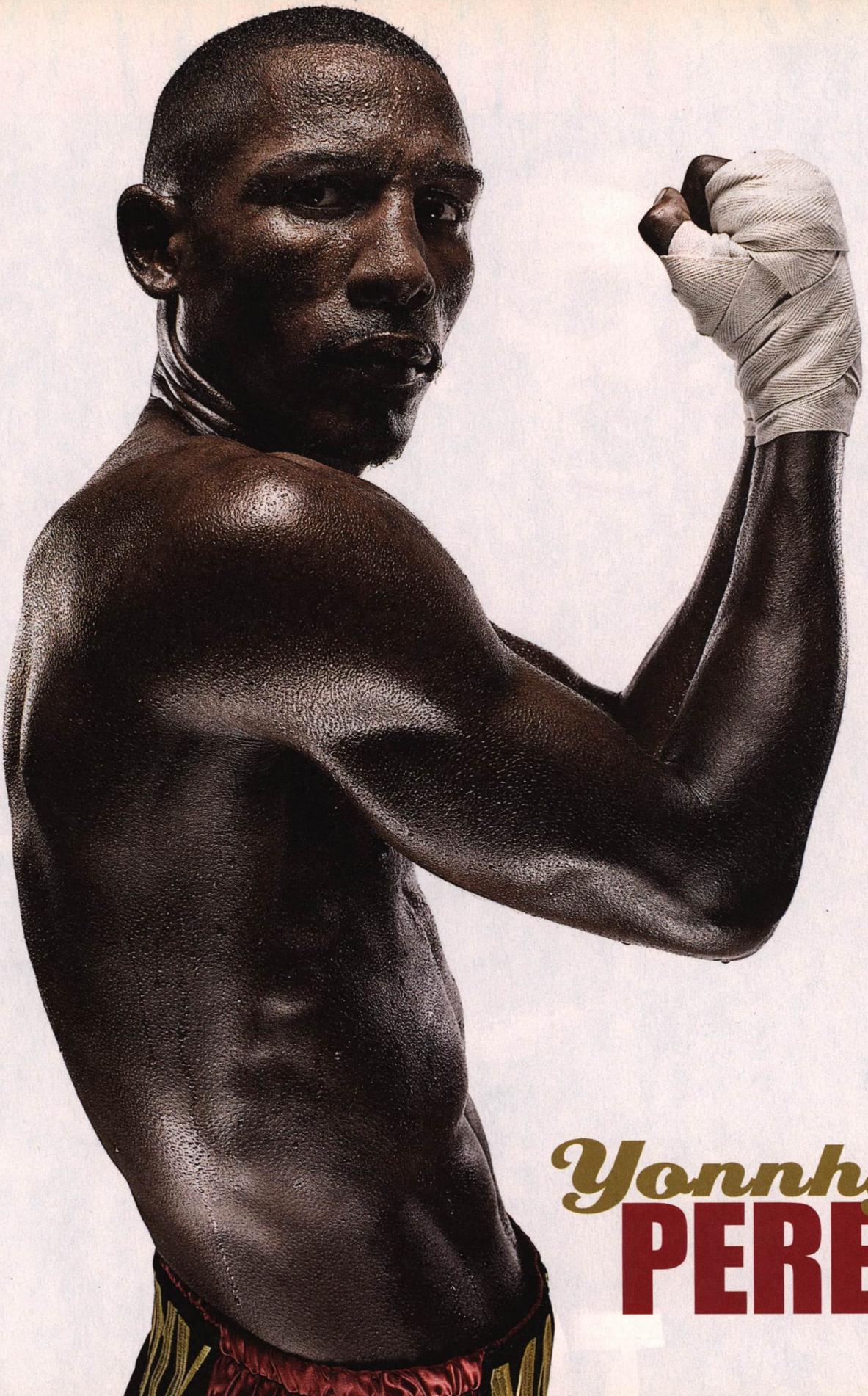
Mares and Perez both are 20-0-1, with the draw against each other, in the

The Professional Record of VIC DARCHINYAN

2000		
Nov. 3	Sande Kizito, Sydney, Australia	W 6
2001		
Feb. 9	Hichem Blida, Sydney	W 4
April 20	Silvio Glinogo, Sydney	KO 2
June 29	Sande Kizito, Bankstown, Australia	W 6
Aug. 3	David Picknell, Sydney	KO 3
Aug. 31	Prasob Nookliang, Sydney	KO 6
Oct. 18	Sande Kizito, Sydney	KO 7
Nov. 16	Puna Eminent, Sydney	KO 3
2002		
Feb. 8	Win Sakpanya, Sydney	KO 3
April 19	Prasob Nookliang, Sydney	KO 2
June 14	Junior Farzan Ali, Sydney	KO 6
Aug. 2	Panomdej Yuthanakorn, Sydney	KO 4
Oct. 25	Hamadani Tomagola, Sydney	KO 4
Nov. 9	Albert Resley, Perth, Australia	KO 3
Dec. 13	Ran Thongprakon, Rosehill, Australia	KO 3
2003		
April 11	Raul Medina, Penrith, Australia	Tech. Win 8
June 13	Wandee Singwancha, Auburn, Australia	KO 4
Aug. 8	Alejandro Montiel, Penrith	W 10
Oct. 3	Dozer Tobing, Homebush Bay, Australia	KO 1
Dec. 12	Wandee Singwancha, Homebush Bay	KO 5
2004		
April 16	Falazona Fidal, Dandenong, Australia	KO 2
Dec. 16	Irene Pacheco, Hollywood, FL (Wins IBF Flyweight Title)	KO 11
2005		
March 27	Mzukisi Sikali, Sydney (Retains IBF Flyweight Title)	KO 8
Aug. 2	Jair Jimenez, Sydney (Retains IBF Flyweight Title)	KO 5
2006		
March 3	Diosdado Gabi, Santa Ynez, CA (Retains IBF Flyweight Title)	KO 8
June 3	Luis Maldonado, Las Vegas (Retains IBF Flyweight Title)	KO 8
Oct. 7	Glenn Donaire, Las Vegas (Retains IBF Flyweight Title)	Tech. Win 6
2007		
March 3	Victor Burgos, Carson, CA (Retains IBF Flyweight Title)	KO 12
July 7	Nonito Donaire, , Bridgeport, CT (Loses IBF Flyweight Title)	KO by 5
Oct. 20	Federico Catubay, Sydney, Australia	KO 12
2008		
Feb. 2	Z Gorres, Cebu, Philippines	D 12
Aug. 2	Dimitri Kirilov, Tacoma, WA (Wins IBF Super Flyweight Title)	KO 5
Nov. 1	Cristian Mijares, Carson (Retains IBF Super Flyweight Title; Wins WBA/WBC Super Flyweight Titles)	KO 9
2009		
Feb. 7	Jorge Arce, Anaheim, CA (Retains IBF/WBA/WBC Super Flyweight Titles)	KO 11
July 11	Joseph Agbeko, Sunrise, FL (For IBF Bantamweight Title)	L 12
Dec. 12	Tomas Rojas, Rancho Mirage, CA (Retains WBA/WBC Super Flyweight Titles)	KO 2
2010		
March 6	Rodrigo Guerrero, Rancho Mirage, CA (Retains WBA/WBC Super Flyweight Titles)	W 12
May 20	Eric Barcelona, Parramatta, Australia (Non-Title Bout)	W 12

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
38	35	2	1	27

Vic
DARCHINYAN
EVERLAST



Yonnhy PEREZ

most recent fight for both men, last May at Staples Center, in the co-feature on the Rafael Marquez-Israel Vasquez IV card. They potentially could meet in the final.

The Mexican-born Mares, who lives in Montebello, California, is enthused by the idea of fighting in his native country for the first time, against Darchinyan. The semifinal bouts will be in Leon, a city with a metropolitan area population of about 1.7 million, in the Mexican state of Guanajuato.

"I've got nothing but respect for him because he has beaten all the Mexican fighters he has faced," said Mares, who turns 25 two weeks before the tournament begins. "He has beaten all the main fighters, but here I am. I'm a Mexican fighter too, and he's going to have to face me in Mexico."

The Professional Record of YONNHY PEREZ

2005		
July 30	Steve Lozoya, Tucson, AZ	KO 1
Sept. 1	Leshaun Blair, Tucson	KO 4
2006		
May 19	Edison Morillo, Montebello, CA	KO 1
June 16	Daniel Quevedo, Sacramento, CA	W 6
July 14	Israel Navarrete, Montebello	KO 2
Sept. 15	Larry Olvera, Corona, CA	KO 6
Oct. 16	Arturo Bracamontes, Ontario, CA	W 6
Nov. 20	Arturo Bracamontes, Ontario	KO 6
2007		
Feb. 23	Luis Agosto, Ontario	KO 2
March 24	Oscar Andrade, Orange, CA	W 8
May 25	Samuel Lopez, Ontario,	KO 1
July 28	Jose Laureano, Tacoma, WA	KO 3
Sept. 7	Antonio Maria Cochero Diaz, Santa Ynez, CA	KO 2
Oct. 5	Alexander Fedorov, Corona	KO 4
2008		
March 1	Alex Becerra, Carson, CA	KO 4
May 2	Manuel Sarabia, Carson	W 6
June 27	Oscar Andrade, Ontario	W 10
Sept. 5	David Martinez, Primm, NV	KO 6
2009		
May 29	Silence Mabuza, Johannesburg, South Africa	KO 12
Oct. 31	Joseph Agbeko, Las Vegas, NV (Wins IBF Bantamweight Title)	W 12
2010		
May 22	Abner Mares, Los Angeles, CA (Retains IBF Bantamweight Title)	D 12

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
21	20	0	1	14

Darchinyan, 35-2-1 (27), a Sydney resident of Armenian descent, certainly has enjoyed enough successes in a decade as a pro, spread across three weight divisions, to make him the most recognizable name in the tournament field. But in handicapping his chances, there is the loss to Agbeko to consider as well as the 34-year-old Darchinyan's senior status in the tournament.

Darchinyan also suffered the only stoppage loss of his career to Donaire, in his seventh flyweight title defense, in 2007, another tidbit certain to be referenced in the upcoming bantamweight publicity battles between the four tournament participants and the two who shunned them.

"Two other guys who aren't involved are Donaire and Montiel," Darchinyan said. "Why? Because they don't want to be involved. They know some of the guys can beat them, so they don't want to be in the tournament."

Darchinyan said that despite his failed foray into the bantamweight division previously, his upcoming move was predicated on the opportunity to face two championship-level opponents in a short period and perhaps win an important tournament. Fighting for championships and defending alphabet belts no longer matters to him, Darchinyan said.

"I moved up to challenge the other champions," he said. "The super tournament connects all the dots."

Perez, the only entrant with a title belt from a major sanctioning body, said he anticipates the field to have its detractors "but I think the best 118-pounders in the world are in the tournament."

The four who accepted tournament bids all agreed to a six-man format, until the fifth and sixth men—or, more problematically, the first and second men, as many perceive Montiel and Donaire—decided they didn't need it.

"It would've been a Super Six, but Montiel and Nonito Donaire didn't want to be part of it," Mares said. "I know they're going to be doing a lot of talking about this tournament not being a real super tournament because they're not in it. But they didn't want to be a part of it and they didn't want to face any of us."

Mares likened the tournament to a major amateur competition, when boxers who otherwise might take care to avoid each other are forced to compete by the lines on a bracket.

"The four-man tournament is great," Mares said. "Tournament boxing is great. It helps not only fighters, but also boxing, because, in this tournament, you have four of the best fighters facing each other. There's no ducking any fighters here. You're fighting the best, no matter what. You don't pick fighters in a tournament, and this is what people want. And I want that." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to The Ring.

KHAN vs. MAIDANA

Does "El Chino" Have More Than A Puncher's Chance?

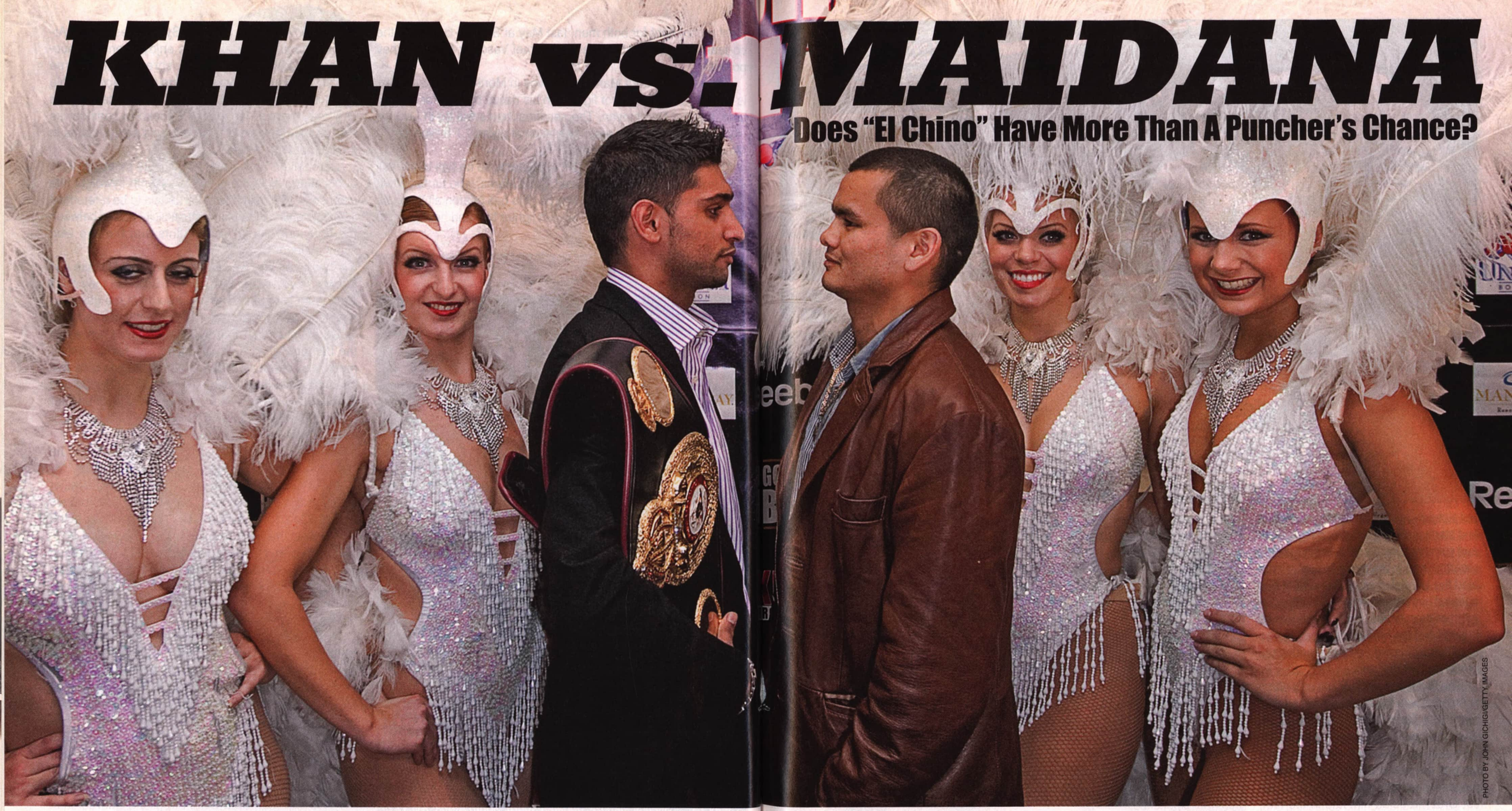


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

By Gavin Evans

More than two years have passed since the heavy hands of Breidis Prescott shattered Amir Khan's world—but that 54-second result is the one thing that gives Marcos Maidana far more than just a sliver of hope.

Peruse the form guide and you'd have to conclude that Khan is a safe bet in Las Vegas on December 11 at the Mandalay Bay. Last year, for example, in his maiden voyage at junior welterweight, Khan barely lost a round against Andreas Kotelnik (one judge had him winning all 12). Five months earlier, Maidana dropped a split decision against Kotelnik.

Since then, Khan has looked impressive in blowing away the previously unbeaten Dmitriy Salita in one round and outclassing Paulie Malignaggi for an 11th-round TKO. Maidana's recent performances have been rather wobblier, including his life-and-death victory over Victor Ortiz, when he was dropped three times, and, last time out, a lethargic points win over a 36-year-old DeMarcus "Chop Chop" Corley, who had lost nine of his previous 15 bouts.

Maidana's record of 29 wins, 27 knockouts, and just one disputed loss looks pretty hot, but it does not include victories over anyone in THE RING's top 10, and his struggles against Kotelnik and Corley suggest a fighter several rungs below Khan when it comes to boxing ability.

"El Chino" turned professional in 2004, and, for his first three years, did all his boxing at home. His crippling power with both hands saw him racking up 24 knockouts in 25 straight wins, but the level of the opposition was none too demanding. His best opponents were one-time fringe contenders Manuel Garnica and Arturo Morua, so his challenge for Kotelnik's WBA title represented a significant step up.

Maidana came out fast and won the opening rounds with his jarring hooks.

Maidana rose to prominence with his June 2009 TKO of highly-touted prospect Victor Ortiz in Los Angeles. It was a major upset and showed just how dangerous the murderous-punching Argentinian can be when he connects with his bombs.

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

But Kotelnik found his range by the fourth and started raking his challenger with jabs and combinations and shaded the middle rounds. Then in the ninth, Maidana wobbled the Ukrainian with a huge right and battered him around the ring. He dominated from then on and probably deserved the nod, but the fight was in Germany, so the German-based titleholder squeaked home via split decision.

The battle that made Maidana's name in America was his atavistic brawl against highflying Golden Boy protégé Ortiz. They swapped knockdowns in the opening round, and Maidana was down twice more in the second. But the Argentinian proved his mettle by forcing the fight. He cut Ortiz, wobbled him late in the fifth, and dropped him with a left hook to the body early in the sixth, after which the American made it clear he didn't want to continue, and the fight was stopped.

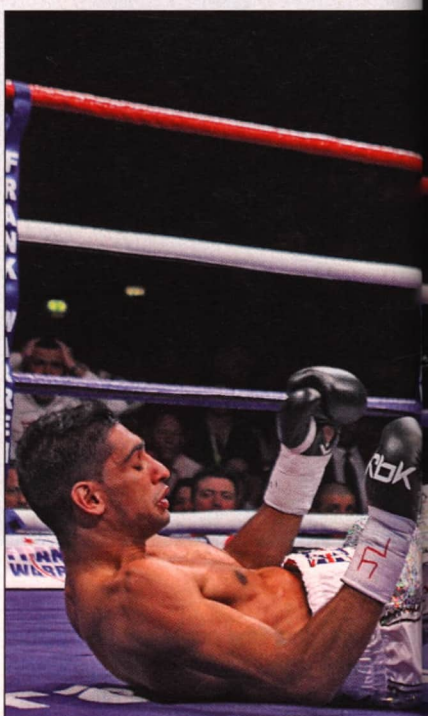
Next came the tall, unbeaten Dominican, Victor Cayo, who outboxed Maidana at the start but found himself down, courtesy of a sizzling left hook, late in the second. Cayo edged the next three rounds with sharp boxing, quick moves, and aggressive combinations, but, in the sixth, a huge right to the stomach put him down for the count.

Against Corley, however, Maidana showed none of this urgency. He knocked the veteran American down in the seventh, but seemed unduly worried by a cut above his own right eye and was exhausted by the final bell.

It was a performance that probably helped persuade Khan's backers that this was a risk worth taking. But the Khan camp should not read too much into his Corley struggle. Maidana had been out of action for six months, distracted by managerial problems, and clearly wasn't in peak shape. It's likely he has learned from the experience.

Khan and his backers are currently in the fortunate position of being able to handpick opponents. Although he's rated below Timothy Bradley by THE RING, he has the ticket-selling power that is the envy of all his rivals.

Ever since winning the silver medal, at the age of 17, in the 2004 Olympics, Khan has enjoyed celebrity status at home in the UK—a patriotic British Mus-



Unheralded Breidis Prescott shocked Khan and the boxing world by stopping the previously undefeated British star in the first round of their September 2008 bout. Khan's suspect chin has some pundits predicting that Maidana can do likewise.

lim with crossover appeal. His looks, his aw-shucks manner, and exciting fighting style have pulled in huge television audiences, and the occasional tabloid tittle-tattle about his private life and his penchant for driving too fast have done little to dent his standing.

This, however, came at a cost: His entire fighting career has been played out under a microscope, and every spill has therefore been magnified. After gaining revenge over his Cuban Olympic conqueror, Mario Kindelan, Khan turned professional in 2005, racked up 18-straight wins, and won the British Commonwealth lightweight title, before the rangy Prescott so dramatically separated him from his senses. Khan was shaken with a jab, dropped with a left hook, and, after rising on spaghetti legs, was flattened with another hook, all within one minute.

It seemed like there was no way back, but Khan's then-promoter, Frank Warren, did an impressive rebuilding job. Two fights later, a clash of heads opened an ugly gash on Marco Antonio Barrera's forehead. The Mexican was gushing blood, but British referee John Coyle let the fight continue until the start of the fifth, which meant it went to the cards. Khan won every round for a technical decision.

In his first fight at junior welterweight, Khan challenged Kotelnik for the WBA title. Under Freddie Roach's tutelage, he fought a highly disciplined long-range fight, taking no chances. His speed and all-round boxing skill made the Ukrainian look pedestrian, and Amir waltzed home a one-sided winner.

His maiden defense, a typical WBA mandatory, was against the undefeated Salita, who arrived with a 30-0-1 (16) record, but was out of his league. Khan dropped him within 10 seconds, and twice more after that, before it was stopped at the 76-second mark of the first round.

Soon after, Khan dumped Frank Warren and signed with Golden Boy Promotions, with the idea of breaking into the American market, and his new backers made an inspired choice.

Khan's second challenger was ideal for his US debut at Madison Square Garden. Paulie Malignaggi had the required name recognition and was fresh from a decisive win over Juan Diaz, but he lacked the power to trouble the taller Englishman. Khan out-sped the speedster and dominated as he pleased until the fight was stopped by merciful referee Steve Smoger midway through the 11th round.

The Englishman, who turns 24 three days before the Maidana fight, is a superbly conditioned athlete who has developed into an outstanding technician. His gifts include arguably the quickest hands and feet in the division, but he's far more than a speed merchant. These days, after two years under Roach, he's beautifully balanced and extremely accurate, particularly with his long left jab. He also carries serious power in his right cross and uppercut. He's equally adept at leading and countering, and, when he breaks loose, he's a dazzling combination puncher.

The 27-year-old Argentinian looks crude and sometimes even clumsy in comparison, relying on aggression, strength, and that well-proven one-punch knockout power. He fights out of a crouch and unleashes big hooks to the head and body up-close, but is not effective at longer range (where Khan is so much at home). Also, he's relatively easy to hit, and, as Ortiz showed, he can be hurt.

So, the most obvious conclusion is that Khan will box rings around Maidana and perhaps stop him, but boxing predictions are not always that clear-cut. Maidana's crunching hooks and short crosses, combined with Khan's

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY GRAHAM STUART/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

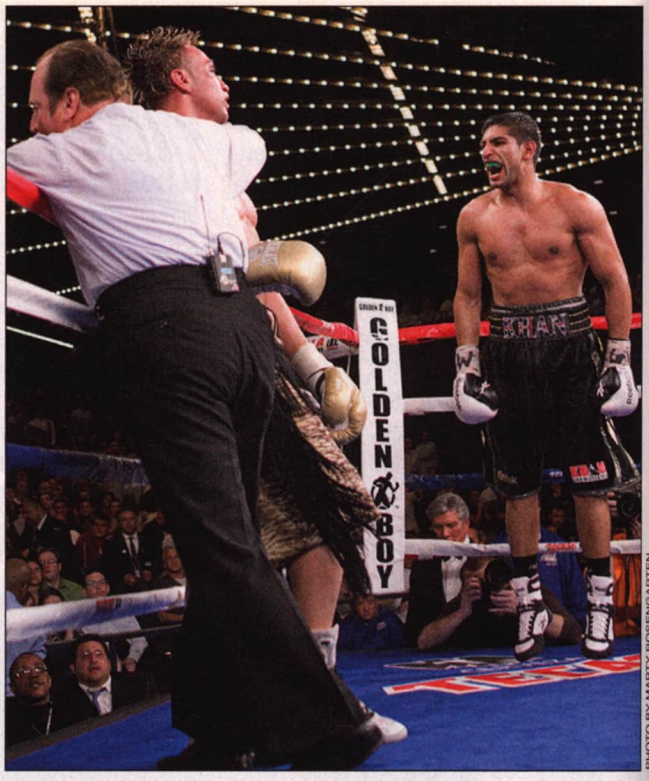


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Khan has rebounded well since his kayo loss to Prescott, stopping Dmitriy Salita in the first round (left) and Paulie Malignaggi in the 11th round (right). However, neither Salita nor Malignaggi are considered dangerous punchers.

suspect punch resistance, make this an intriguing contest.

Maidana says he has great respect for Khan's talent and acknowledges he may have to do a lot of chasing, but he says he has never trained this hard and that, in the end, he will land the big one.

"It might take me a while to catch him because I expect him to run a lot, but I'll catch him," promised Maidana.

The Argentinian will enter the ring with the idea that just one clean punch will be all he needs, and he may be right. The truth is that there have been doubts about the Englishman's ability to take a hard shot to the head ever since his amateur days.

In his final unpaid bout, a Craig Watson right dumped him on his back. In his 10th professional fight, he took a short count against Rachid Drilzane. Three fights later, he fought light-fisted Willie Limond and was dropped heavily and lurched about on rubbery legs after getting up. He was again knocked down against Michael Gomez in 2008 and twice more against Prescott. Limond and Gomez were pumped up junior lightweights and Prescott a lightweight. Moreover, none of Khan's three fights at junior welterweight have been against men known for their power.

So it doesn't take much effort to imagine what would happen if perhaps the world's hardest hitting 140-pounder landed flush on Khan's jaw or temple.

Khan is well-attuned to the danger, but he suggests it has been overstated.

"Maidana is a good, strong fighter, and I've got to be careful of his power," Khan said, "but that goes for anyone else in the ring." He also insists that his opponent would do well to heed the same advice. "Marcos Maidana is known as a very big puncher, but I think I am a bigger puncher. Although I am best known for my speed, ask people I've fought about my punch, and they can tell you."

Veteran British boxing writer George Zeleny, who has followed every top British lightweight and junior welter since the heyday of Dave Charnley 40 years ago, believes Khan's weaknesses might outweigh his strengths against a pure puncher such as Maidana.

"I'm not a big Khan fan and wouldn't yet rate him at the level of Charnley," Zeleny said. "He has great speed, boxing ability, and a very sharp jab, but his inability to take a solid punch really counts against him."

Asked to make a prediction, Zeleny comes out in favor of the Argentinian. "He's certainly crude, and it's possible that Khan will keep out of his way and win on points. But all it could take is one punch over 12 rounds, and I think Maidana will catch him and knock him out before round six."

Not surprisingly, Argentinian boxing writer Carlos Irusta agrees, albeit with several qualifications.

"Maidana can knock out any junior welterweight in the world with just one punch, but look at what happened last time out," said Irusta. "He knocked Corley down but looked exhausted by round eight, so he lost his power, his stamina, and his attitude."

Irusta, THE RING's long-serving Argentina correspondent, also notes that Maidana has problems with elusive, quick-stepping boxers in the Khan mold.

"When they move around the ring like Corley and Cayo, Maidana is in trouble, although Cayo made the mistake of deciding to exchange blows and got knocked out." Irusta adds that the

Maidana strolls to a neutral corner after flooring Victor Cayo en route to a sixth-round knockout victory in March 2010. Cayo was undefeated in 24 pro bouts before Maidana ended his streak with a crippling bodyshot.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

notion of Maidana as an immovable object is off the mark. "He's been floored several times as an amateur and a professional, so he will have to show a lot of head movement and a lot of bending, with his guard very high, while throwing sharp combinations up close, because Khan is a good counterpuncher who particularly likes to throw those sharp uppercuts."

Still, Irusta predicts the 10-week Las Vegas training camp under the watchful eye of veteran trainer Miguel Diaz will make the difference.

"Maidana is a boxer who needs to be in control," Irusta said. "He likes to be the aggressor, and I think he can defeat Khan by early knockout if he's very focused, takes command of the ring, and arrives in the best condition of his life."

So, two experts, one prediction: a quick and decisive defeat for Amir Khan. And that's certainly a strong possibility. In boxing, lightning often strikes twice. All it could take is a single error, and a right cross or left hook could instantly relieve the Englishman of the WBA belt.

But the more likely result is that Roach's expert tuition and tactical know-how, and Khan's immense innate ability will be enough to get them through.

Speed, lateral movement, rapid fire jabs, and dazzling combinations will discourage Maidana, and perhaps even carve him up. A late-round Khan stoppage victory or a wide points win seems the most likely result. But with a puncher like Maidana in the other corner, there are no guarantees. ■

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Khan's edge could very well be trainer Freddie Roach who has vastly improved the Englishman's technique during their time together. And while Roach can teach defense, he can't do much about Khan's apparently fragile chin.

Gavin Evans is a London-based freelance writer and a regular contributor to THE RING.

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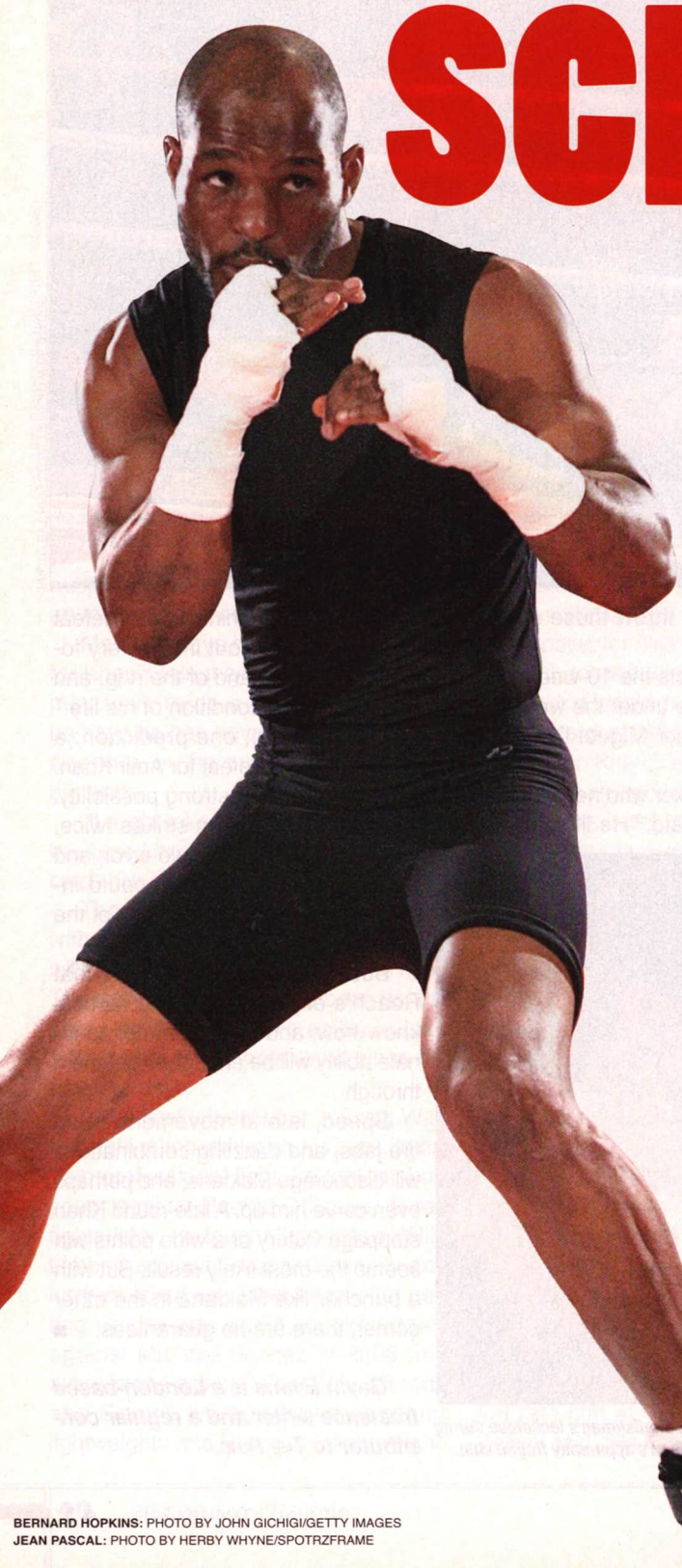


BERNARD HOPKINS: PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES
JEAN PASCAL: PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPOTRZFRAME

Pascal Takes Aim At A Legend, Hopkins Takes Aim At History

By Eric Raskin

When you're 45 years, 11 months, and three days old, what difference does a lousy 38 days make?

Bernard Hopkins believes in breaking records and making history. So to him, 38 days makes all the difference in the world.

It's by a span of 38 days that Hopkins can set the record for oldest fighter ever to win a major title when he challenges Jean Pascal for THE RING world light heavyweight championship on December 18 on Showtime. (We specify "major" title because, for example, Joe Bugner defeated Bonecrusher Smith for something called the WBF heavyweight title at age 48. No further explanation needed.) George Foreman was 45 years, nine months, and 26 days old when he landed a one-two to the kisser and knocked out Michael Moorer in 1994 to become heavyweight champ. Hopkins will be 38 days older than that when he ducks through the ring ropes at the Pepsi Coliseum in Quebec City, Quebec, to challenge Pascal.

There's a reason very few fighters over the age of 40 have won legitimate championships. Guys in their 40s aren't supposed to be able to outfight guys half their age. But Hopkins, by his own declaration, "ain't normal."

"It's a rare situation to be in a position to make history like this," Hopkins said, "and I am a rare human being. I think at the end of the day, somewhere down the line, my genetics and my body will be analyzed by scientists. This ain't normal! When people say things ain't normal, normally it's a bad situation. But this is not normal!"

Unfortunately for Hopkins, standing in his way is a fighter who just might turn out to be abnormal himself.

On the surface, Pascal and Hopkins would appear not to have much in common. Pascal was born in the '80s. Hopkins was born in the '60s. Pascal is originally from Haiti and shaped his identity in francophone Quebec. Hopkins is originally from Philadelphia and shaped his identity within the walls of Graterford Prison. Pascal spent the last 14 years dreaming of being Roy Jones. Hopkins spent those same years dreaming of beating Roy Jones.

Hopkins achieved that particular longstanding goal this past April, and, just eight months later, Pascal has an opportunity to avenge his idol's defeat. But while Pascal incorporates the physical stylings of Jones into certain elements of his in-ring repertoire, the reality is that he more resembles the supposed enemy mentally. Some of the same things that have helped Hopkins to be "not normal" are present in Pascal.

Pascal has a dedication to his body and his craft that is reminiscent of Hopkins. The Canadian is a true student of the game, like Hopkins. He believes that you can only become great by taking on other great fighters and cares deeply about his place in history, philosophies shared by Hopkins.

Who do you think uttered this quote? "The key is to never waste a day. Each day is a day to get better and better." Sounds like a Hopkins-ism, right? But it's a Pascal-ism.

And it's part of the reason this fight is so fascinating. Roy Jones provides a link of sorts between the two fighters, but the real link is in the championship they've both held and are now competing for and the shared mentality that guarantees there won't be a sit-up left undone or a fight tape left unanalyzed prior to fight night. In the ring, we'll get the very best of a motivated Pascal and the very best of a motivated Hopkins—whatever that might be as "The Executioner" finds himself closer to 50 than to 40.

Hopkins' accomplishments since celebrating the big four-oh are nothing short of amazing. At 40, he dominated Howard Eastman to secure his record 20th consecutive successful middleweight title defense. At 41, he moved up and virtually shut out Antonio Tarver for the light heavyweight championship. At 42, he beat a fellow pound-for-pounder in Winky Wright, and, at 43, he schooled middleweight champ Kelly Pavlik in an over-the-weight non-title bout. Along the way, he's suffered three losses, but not a single one was conclusive. His two fights with Jermain Taylor in '05 and his '08 bout with Joe Calzaghe all could have gone either way.

However, it has now been more than two years since we saw an impressive Hopkins performance. He looked rusty in the early rounds against the ordinary Enrique Ornelas, and he almost re-

PHOTO BY ANTHONY NESTE/HBO

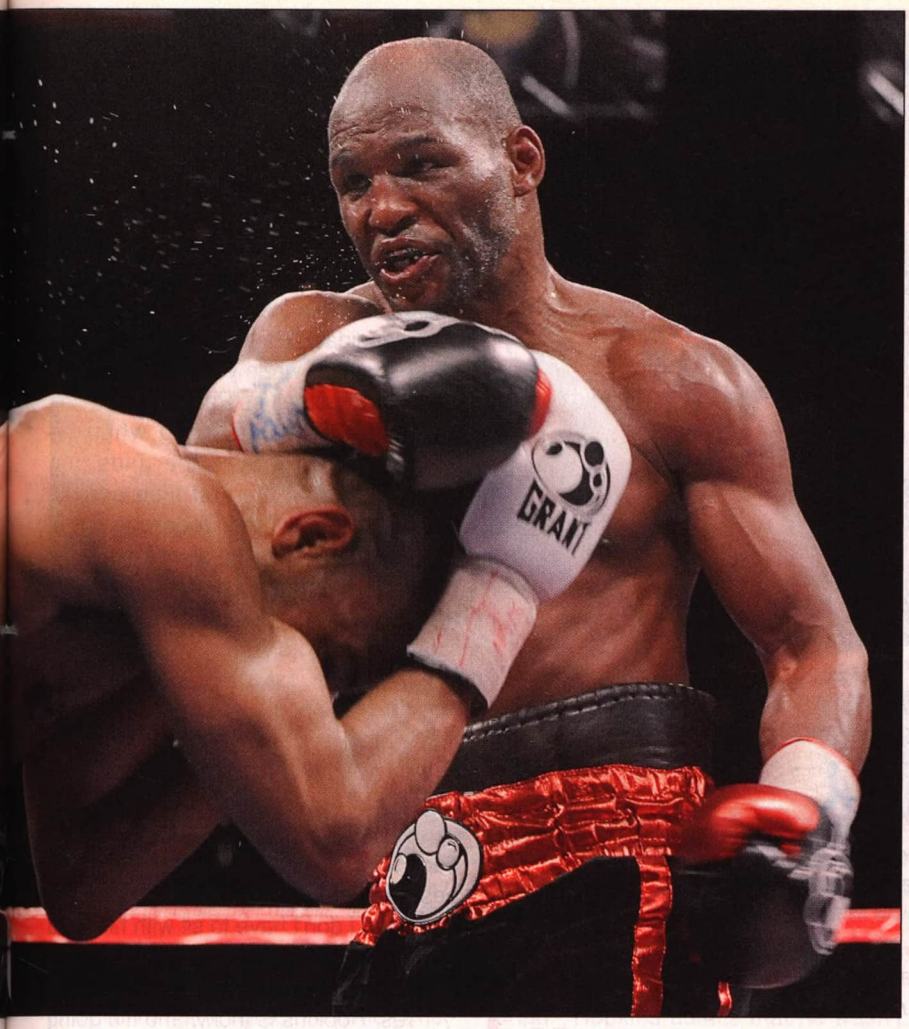
Currently, George Foreman holds the record for being the oldest man to ever win a legitimate world championship, but, if Hopkins defeats Pascal, he'll beat Foreman's record by 38 days.

Hopkins' most recent bout was an ugly 12-round decision over old rival Roy Jones. It was far from a great performance from B-Hop, and he knows he'll have to fight far better if he's going to upset Pascal.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPOTRZFRAME

Pascal pictured en route to winning the vacant light heavyweight championship against Chad Dawson in August 2010. Instead of taking an easy first defense, the Canadian is tackling future Hall of Famer Hopkins in a bid to enhance his legacy.



sembled an actual 45-year-old in outpointing the completely used up Jones earlier this year.

So could it be that Hopkins, 51-5-1 (32), is finally slowing down appreciably? We all know the fine wine cliché, but any sommelier will tell you that each bottle has a range of years during which the taste improves, and, after that, it starts to go downhill whether you pop the cork or not.

"I feel like I'm about 35," Hopkins told THE RING in October. "I don't feel like I'm 20, obviously. But I think that no matter how old I get, I'm always going to feel 10 years younger than the average person my age. So I think when I become 50, I'm going to be 40. When I become 60, I'm going to be 50. I think if you look back at the archives of old articles and things I said about 15 years ago, I said if I wanted to, I could fight until I'm 50 years old. I'm blessed. I think I talk pretty good, no brain damage. Does my back hurt sometimes? Yes. I mean, you run five miles a day for the last 15 years, your back will hurt. I'm not a bionic man. But at the end of the day, I'm not the norm."

That performance against Jones—though victorious—was not the norm either. It was maybe the most unimpressive version of Hopkins we've ever seen.

But Pascal isn't going to read anything into that.

"With boxing, we never know what can happen. You can look old and bad in one fight, then look great in your next fight," Pascal said. "Shane Mosley did that against Antonio Margarito after everyone said he was finished. So I'm not going to judge Hopkins by his last performance."

If we judge Pascal, 26-1 (16), by his last performance, then he's a formidable fighter indeed. In fact, his last four fights suggest a potentially special competitor. He became the first to hang a loss on

40 And Fabulous

Hopkins still needs to defeat Pascal to break Foreman's record for oldest ever to become champion, but, no matter what, B-Hop is on the short list of fighters who have held a major title in their 40s. Here's a look at the six men who either turned 40 holding a title or grabbed one after their 40th birthday:

George Foreman, 48 (age at end of reign)
Though stripped by the alphabets, held lineal heavyweight title until controversial loss to Shannon Briggs

Archie Moore, 47 (age at end of reign)
"The Old Mongoose" won light heavyweight title at 39 and never lost it in the ring

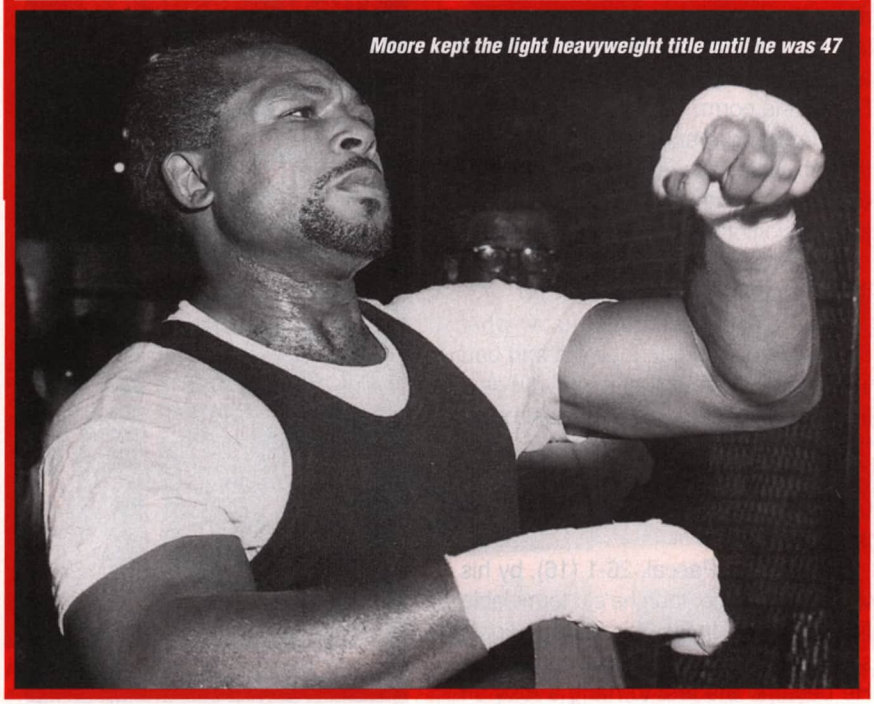
Bernard Hopkins, 43 (age at end of reign)
Held both 160- and 175-pound titles in his 40s, the latter reign ending in close decision to Joe Calzaghe

Virgil Hill, 43 (age at end of reign)
It was a dubious version of a cruiserweight alphabet title, but win over Valery Brudov at age 42 still noteworthy

Bob Fitzsimmons, 42 (age at end of reign)
The first to win a title after 40; lost light heavy strap in first defense two years after winning it

Giacobbe Fragomeni, 40 (age at end of reign)
Won a vacant cruiser alphabet strap at 39, lost it to Zsolt Erdei three months after turning 40

—E.R.



Moore kept the light heavyweight title until he was 47

rugged Adrian Diaconu, stopped crafty veteran Silvio Branco, repeated the Diaconu win despite dislocating his shoulder mid-fight, and then upset pound-for-pound entrant Chad Dawson via 11-round technical decision to claim the vacant RING title.

Before that streak of victories, Pascal suffered his lone loss, a close decision to Carl Froch in the UK in a Fight of the Year candidate. Hey, you can't win them all—especially when you're as eager to challenge yourself as Pascal is.

"He was the underdog when he fought Froch. He was the underdog when he fought the first time against Diaconu. He was the underdog when he fought Dawson. And all of them were undefeated opponents," noted Pascal's promoter, Yvon Michel. "He was not scared to go into Froch's backyard the first time—we lost there, but it was not the end of the world. And we came back two fights later against Diaconu in Jean's first light heavyweight fight. Jean Pascal is going straightforward; he doesn't try to slalom between the challenges. After each fight, he looks at which one is the best challenge, and this is great for a promoter. I don't have to sit with him and convince him what is going to be good for his career. He knows it.

"Yes, Hopkins is tricky, and it's going to be a good, tough challenge. There are two challenges in this fight, actually: to win and to look good doing so."

So far, looking good hasn't been a problem for the 27-year-old Pascal. If there's one thing that sets him apart completely from both idol Jones and opponent Hopkins, it's that the reigning light heavyweight champ makes for exciting fights. He describes himself as a "gambler" and a "risk-taker." He hits and is willing to get hit.

But don't take that to imply Pascal is some face-first brawler (if he was, you'd surely never hear anyone compare him to Jones). He's awkwardly aggressive, throwing plenty of punches but moving quite a bit as he does so, switching from orthodox to southpaw and back again, and varying his attack from single shots at odd angles to rapid-fire flurries with his head down. He's fast and athletic, though not on par with a prime Jones in regard to either adjective.

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPOTRZFRAME

Although he's very quick and agile, Pascal isn't averse to mixing it up, as was evident in both of his bouts with slugger Adrian Diaconu. Pascal twice won unanimous decisions over Diaconu, but neither victory was easy. Pascal fought through a dislocated shoulder to win the rematch.

Hopkins noted the Jones resemblance, but prefers to compare Pascal to a Hall of Fame fighter from the generation prior to his.

"Pascal reminds me of Aaron Pryor," Hopkins said. "Aaron Pryor had a style where he fought like a fighter on the street, but he knew what he was doing and he confused you because nobody else knew what the hell he was doing. Pascal has that type of ability where he gets hit here and there, but he has such an unorthodox style where he confuses you and you start looking at him like a deer in the headlights."

That's precisely what happened to Dawson, who saw the openings against Pascal but couldn't get comfortable and didn't take advantage of those openings often enough. It was a startling turn of events for those who had prematurely handed the keys to the division over to Dawson. But it was a welcome turn of events for Hopkins.

Following B-Hop's win over Pavlik, efforts were made to pair Hopkins with Dawson, and many observers speculated that Hopkins wanted nothing to do with a gifted young southpaw like "Bad Chad." Hopkins admits that he wasn't particularly interested, but insists it had nothing to do with the dangers Dawson presented. Rather, he says he passed because of what Dawson *didn't* present: enough money.

Considering he's now taking a fight against Pascal, who's every bit as young and gifted as Dawson, the explanation sounds reasonable.

"Chad Dawson, to me, was a guy that HBO felt had enough to beat Bernard Hopkins, but they weren't willing to put up the money to prove that they had confidence in this guy," Hopkins said. "I mean, what would it look like for Bernard Hopkins to come off the amazing upset of Kelly Pavlik and then turn around and fight a Chad Dawson for less money than I'd been making? I got the same money fighting Roy Jones Jr., a dead man, as I would have gotten to fight Chad Dawson. The problem was that Chad Dawson can't sell out Hartford, Connecticut. He doesn't even sell tickets at home. That doesn't do anything for me. Jean Pascal *does* sell tickets in Canada."

Michel is predicting a sold-out Pepsi Coliseum, 16,000 strong, and, because both fighters are set to earn a percentage of the live gate, it's easy to understand why Hopkins was so much more eager to fight Pascal than to fight Dawson. And remember, Dawson was just an alphabet titlist at the time a fight with Hopkins was being discussed. Pascal has THE RING belt that signifies that all other belt-holders are really just contenders to his legitimate championship, and, as a two-division former RING champ, that means something to Hopkins.

"Bernard Hopkins doesn't do anything just to do it," the future Hall of Famer noted, slipping into third-person mode. "There's always a reason behind it. Whether it will play out in my favor, we'll see, but I'm willing to take that chance."

If it doesn't play out in Hopkins' favor, will that finally be the end of the road for a fighter who turned pro in 1988, back when Pascal was a mere six years old?

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What's Next For Pascal?

Though the ancient Hopkins is the more compelling story to most fight fans, the reality is that Pascal is the favorite in the fight, at odds of a little more than 2-1 at most sports books. So if the odds hold up, what awaits for the young, prime light heavyweight champion of the world?

There was a rematch clause in his contract for the Dawson fight (with one interim fight allowed first); so in theory, that would come next. However, as of press time, Dawson's people were in talks to match him against Tavoris Cloud on HBO in early-2011. Dawson and Cloud are ranked the numbers one and two contenders, respectively, in THE RING ratings, so the winner would unquestionably have earned the next crack at Pascal. If Dawson-Cloud happens, Pascal would have the luxury of sitting back and waiting—and perhaps taking one more interim fight.

"Jean will be active. He is not going to sit and wait for somebody," promoter Yvon Michel said. "What I'd like to see, after Jean beats Hopkins, maybe a guy like Joe Calzaghe would try to challenge him. Calzaghe retired because he had done everything and there was no real challenge. There were no other stars in the division, but Jean, by beating Hopkins, he will emerge as the star of the division. And maybe Calzaghe will feel like he's got to come back to match his skill with Jean Pascal."

The biggest attraction among potential opponents who aren't currently retired is super middleweight titlist Lucian Bute, who is probably the only fighter who's a bigger draw in the province of Quebec right now than Pascal. In the November 2010 issue of THE RING, Canadian boxing analyst, trainer, and cutman Russ Anber was quoted as saying Pascal vs. Bute would be "the single biggest fight ever in Canadian history, even surpassing Sugar Ray Leonard and Roberto Duran."

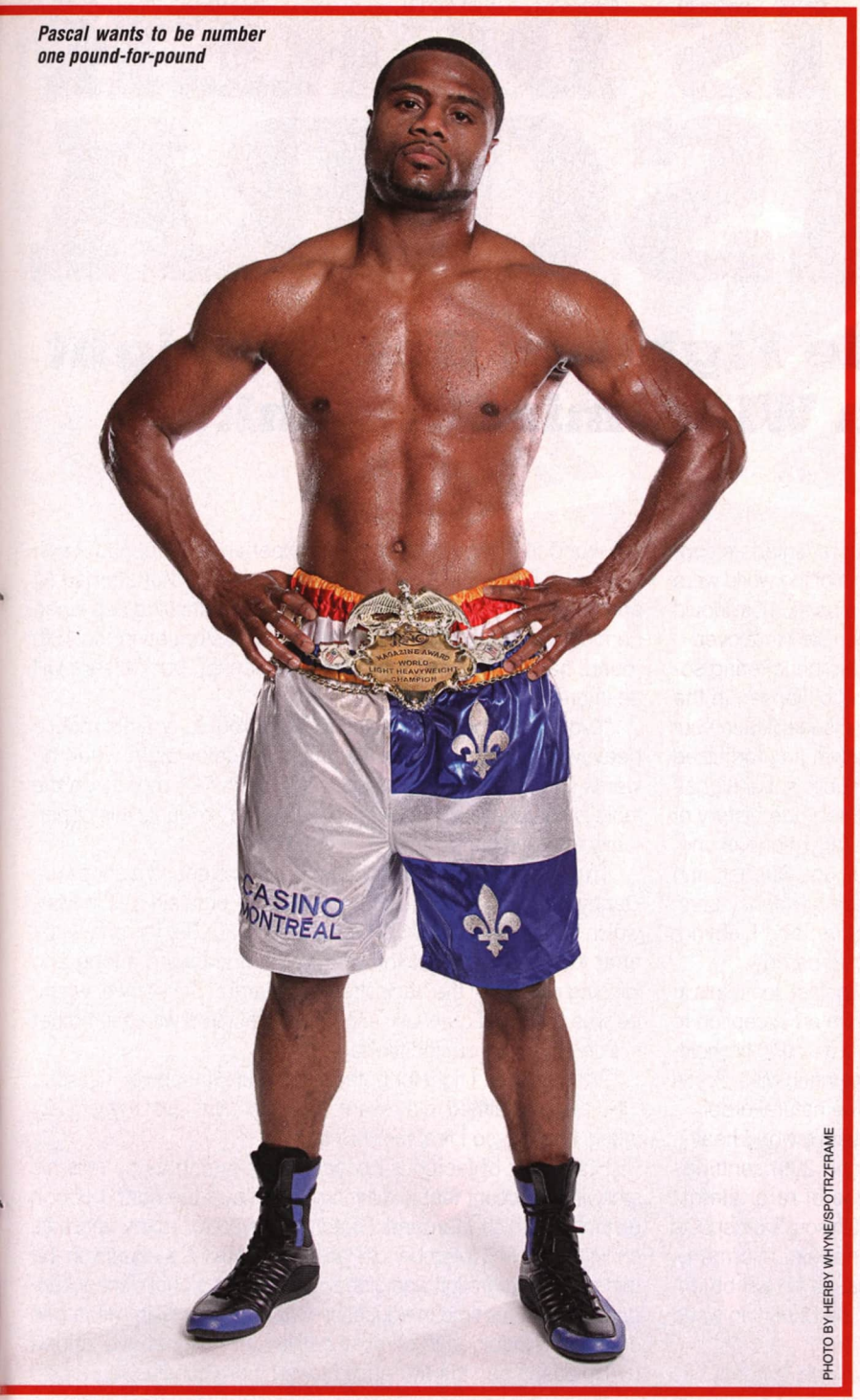
As for what Pascal wants to do next, he's open to just about any option.

"My goal in boxing is to be the best pound-for-pound in the world," Pascal said. "Beating Chad Dawson and then Hopkins, people will rank me among the best. But I want to go beyond that. After I fight Hopkins, if anybody says they are better than me, I'll be ready to fight them."

—E.R.

"People have been wondering is this the last one?" Hopkins asked without THE RING having to pose the question. "No, I don't believe it is. All I can say is I am going to get out of this game when I feel that I can't do it anymore. When I can't train for six or seven weeks like a young 25-year-old, that's when it's over. When you start hearing that Bernard Hopkins is getting up at 8:00 instead of getting up at 5:00, then you can write the big headline, 'Father Time Has Caught Bernard Hopkins.'"

A lot of folks have written variations on that headline before. They wrote it when he didn't look great over 24 rounds against Taylor. They wrote it when he faded late against Calzaghe. And they



Pascal wants to be number one pound-for-pound

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPOTRZFRAME

wrote it earlier this year when he and Jones combined for one of the ugliest boxing displays in recent memory.

At the end of the Pascal fight, they just might be writing it again, and they just might be right to do so. Pascal seems to have all the tools to potentially be that guy who finally leads The Executioner to the gallows.

But astute observers know better than to ever count Hopkins out—especially in situations where a majority of experts *are* counting him out.

Hopkins will be motivated to make history on December 18. Pascal will be motivated to make *Hopkins* history. Neither one could be defined as "normal." May the most abnormal man win. ■

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WHO IS DEREK CHISORA

And Why Is He Fighting Heavyweight Champion Wladimir Klitschko?

By Brian Doogan

If all the British fighters who have been presented as contenders for the heavyweight championship of the world were laid end to end, Hugh McIlvanney once mused, most would look pretty much as they did when their challenges were over.

From Phaintin' Phil Scott—who earned his unflattering sobriquet in a comical cycle of groin-clutching collapses in the 1920s, which yielded a sequence of wins by disqualification but failed to secure him a title shot—to Don Cockell (immortalized by A.J. Liebling as "a fat man whose gift for public suffering has enlisted the sympathy of a sentimental people"), the history of British heavyweights has not been a particularly glorious one. When you add Brian London, Henry Cooper, Joe Bugner, and Richard Dunn to the succession of British heavyweight losers, McIlvanney, the doyen of British sportswriters, and Liebling, author of *The Sweet Science*, were entitled to parody.

Tommy Farr's heroic stand for 15 rounds against Joe Louis in 1937 at the original Yankee Stadium made him an exception to the rule, but lovable Frank Bruno's brief tenure as WBC titleholder culminated in carnage almost 60 years later when Mike Tyson returned from incarceration and reaffirmed the natural order.

Bob Fitzsimmons and Lennox Lewis, Britain's world heavyweight champions at the end of the 19th and 20th centuries respectively, proved to be shining beacons of rare, almost historical virtue, so it is inevitable that Derek Chisora's prospects on December 12 at the SAP-Arena in Mannheim, Germany, appear brutally bleak—and not merely because he will be encountering Wladimir Klitschko at the peak of the Ukrainian world heavyweight champion's puissance.

The 26-year-old resident of Hampstead, North London, has been characterized by some observers as a "novice" somewhat akin to Leon Spinks when he challenged—and defeated—Muhammad Ali in February 1978 at the Las Vegas Hilton.

"But sometimes in boxing you must be bold and roll the die and take a calculated risk," countered Chisora's formidably experienced promoter, Frank Warren. "I had reservations, too, because 'Del Boy' has only had 14 fights and Klitschko is world number one. But I am coming round to the idea. Not only does Chisora really want a chance, I'm starting to think he can win it. Matt Skelton had 22 fights before he fought for [a version of] the world title after zero amateur experience. And, yes, Leon Spinks, in his eighth fight, got his shot against Muhammad Ali and beat him. Samuel Peter was a walking punching bag when he fought Klitschko [in September and got stopped in the 10th round, having endured a prodigious beating], but Chisora will be in great condition.

"I've always believed Klitschko has trouble against mobile heavyweights. Chisora moves like a middleweight when he wants to, has a good chin and a big heart. The money on the table is not amazing, but Derek has told me he wants this opportunity to prove himself."

The British heavyweight champion, who stopped a shopworn Danny Williams in two rounds to win the Lonsdale belt in May, which he successfully defended against Sam Sexton one week after Klitschko's demolition of Peter, has traveled a long and winding road from the back streets of Harare, Zimbabwe, where he was born and grew up until he was reunited with his mother in London as a troubled teenager.

"When I fight, I fight for both Britain and Zimbabwe," Chisora, 14-0 (9), proclaimed in a recent interview. "But I lost my virginity in this country, so I feel more British."

His matter-of-factness becomes less jarring as he tells his story in an accent that is distinctly Finchley—the north London district for which Margaret Thatcher served for many years as constituency MP (Member of Parliament). He left a country in the midst of disintegration and global isolation for a public school upbringing. But his time in education was brief; he fell in with a bad crowd and indulged in criminal activity that might have landed him in prison had the evidence proved more conclusive.

"It was the usual petty crime, but I never went to jail," Chisora recollected. "There was evidence, but not enough to put me in prison. How many misdemeanors? I did about 10 crimes, but I never got locked up for any of them. I was never caught at the crime scene. The law in this country means that they have to catch you at the crime scene to prove anything. They have to catch you red-handed. Every time I got arrested they would say, 'You're under arrest for this and that,' and I would say, 'Cool, let's go.' In the end, I asked for probation, and I think they saw I wasn't ruthless. I obeyed the rules for two years, and it was my

PHOTO BY GRAHAM HUGHES/GETTY IMAGES

probation officer, Peter Yates, who said, 'Why don't you try boxing?' He fixed me up at Finchley Boxing Club, and that's when I turned my life around."

Early indications were far from promising before his natural bravado came shining through.

"In my first sparring session, I got hit by a bad jab that smacked me in the nose and brought tears to my eyes," Chisora revealed, his contorted expression conveying the trauma this induced. "I walked out of the ring, but my trainer turned around and shouted: 'What are you doing? Get back in here. This is boxing.' So I got back in and I haven't looked back.

"So far, it's taken me to the level of British champion, yet still women don't seem to like me. I thought when I won the British title things would change. But it ain't happening. I guess it may be because I'm a rude person. But men are hunters. We look. We like. We approach. Women don't like the fact that I do it with a swagger. They don't like me walking into the room like I got a million dollars in my pocket when I ain't. But, as a boxer, you need that swagger. Otherwise, I might look at the name 'Klitschko' and run away, a bit like [WBA heavyweight titleholder and former world cruiserweight champion] David Haye has done. Haye will not fight the Klitschkos as long as they are champions, but I'm up for the fight against Wladimir and will take both of them on.

"This is about glory for me and becoming the heavyweight champion of the world, something I've dreamed about since I started boxing. The Klitschkos have ruled for too long, and I can't wait to get in the ring in Germany and smash the living daylights out of Wladimir first. Vitali is waiting in the background, and I'll deal with him once I've dealt with Wladimir [if he wins, he will be contractually obliged to box Vitali next]. An opportunity like this may not come around again for a long time, so I know I've got to take it, and, believe me, I will. One shot is all I need."

One shot was all he needed to be catapulted to the higher echelons of his domestic competition. Former world title challenger Williams—dominated for eight rounds by the older Klitschko in 2004 before being stopped, mercifully—was a markedly faded force when he defended the British belt at Upton Park, the East London home of the West Ham United Football Club. At 37 years old, it was almost instantly apparent that he had nothing left, and Chisora punished him relentlessly with a two-fisted assault throughout the opening three minutes. Early in the second round, a sickening right uppercut to the head drew the small, remaining residue of resistance from Williams' body, and a left hook sent him crashing to the canvas. Williams beat the count, but Chisora put him down again with a chopping right to the top of the head. The one-time conqueror of Mike Tyson had to be rescued by the referee, and Chisora's celebrations were typically unrestrained.

In his only bout since, the ninth-round stoppage of Sexton, Chisora was characteristically aggressive after a circumspect start, wearing down his

PHOTO BY ALEX GRIMM/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko surveys his collection of championship belts prior to his successful September 2010 defense against Sam Peter. So far, no challenger has come close to depriving "Dr. Steelhammer" of his prized possessions, and it would be a huge upset if Chisora were to do so.

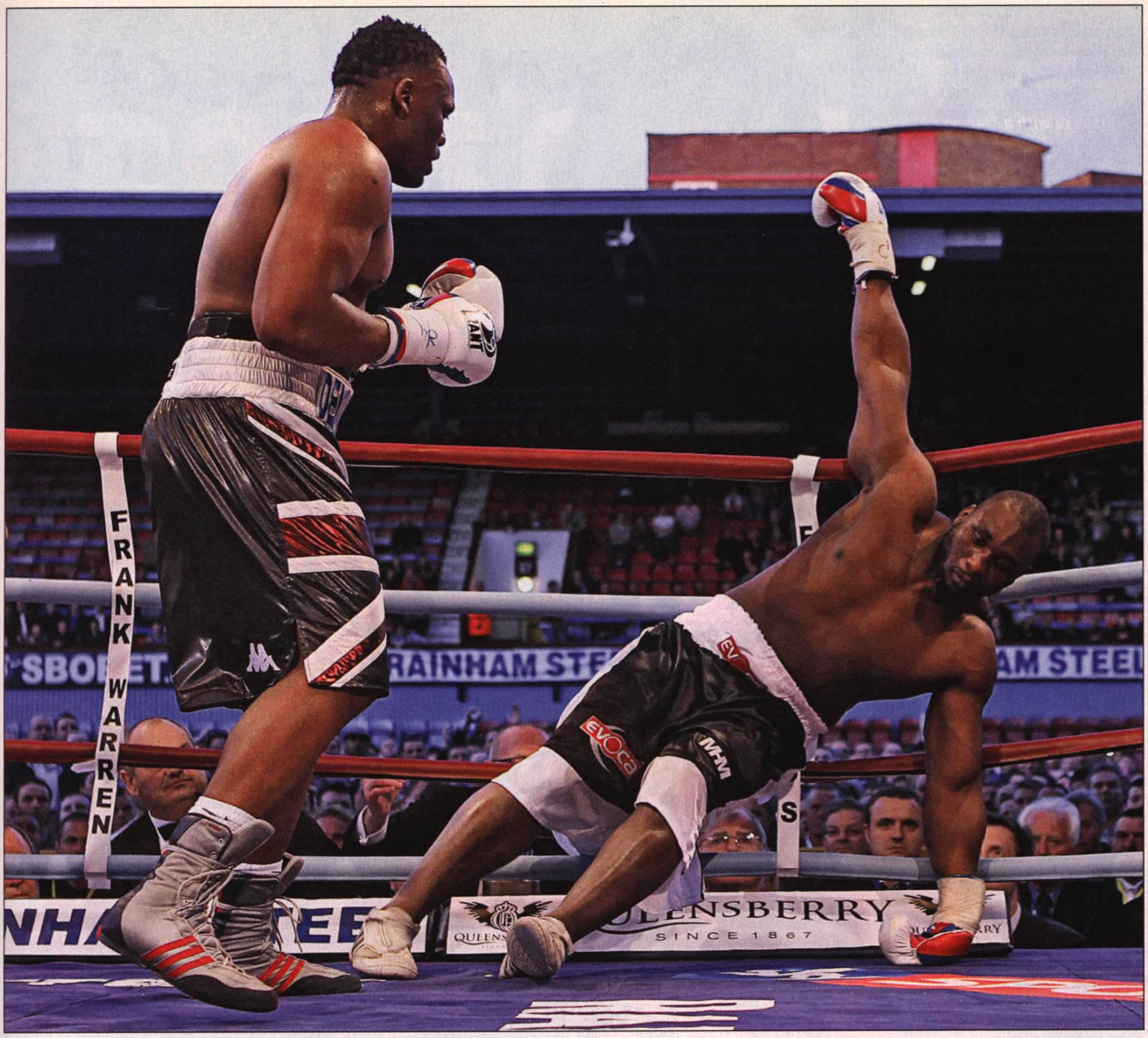

PHOTO BY WARREN LITTLE/GETTY IMAGES

Chisora sends Danny Williams tumbling to the canvas en route to winning the British heavyweight championship via second-round knockout in May 2010. In his only bout since then, Chisora stopped Sam Sexton in the ninth round of a September match in Birmingham.

challenger from Norwich with a steady accumulation of big blows before 20 unanswered punches prompted the referee to intervene.

"Anyone who may doubt 'Del Boy' ought to be made aware of the fact that there was more action in his last fight than there has been in the entire career of Audley Harrison," declared Warren.

Yet there is more to Chisora's character than might immediately meet the eye, a redemptive soul somewhere beneath the belligerence and the scheming skin of the hunter. His 'Del Boy' nickname comes from the popular British TV series *Only Fools and Horses* in which the main character was a cocky Cockney on the trail of the "nice little earner" that would make him a millionaire.

Chisora deals in flashy cars such as the black Bentley GT that is his current ride and the Aston Martin Vantage V8, the Rolls Royce Phantom convertible, and the Maserati he has added to his burgeoning sideline business. He also deals in antiques and is an avid collector of furniture from the Tudor and Edwardian eras.

"I love antiques, especially old-style English furniture, but, most of all, I love a special kind of antique," he said. "The first thing I collected was an old-style parking meter—you remember the ones with the yellow and green and red flag? I bought it for £100. I'm trying now to get a red phone box. And the post boxes, those red ones, are really nice too. I also want an old black London taxi and a double-decker bus, and I'll keep them all in one big space.

"I've got other items and I put them on eBay. I just sit on the computer and watch what comes up on it. Maybe I'll get a painting next, but I don't know much about them. I'm looking into a couple of other things at the moment. There's a load of money to be made in the selling and renting of the cars, and I've got partners who help me with it. We buy them at auctions and on eBay, anything at all so long as we can sell them on.

Chisora and Barry McGuigan pose at a special screening of the Tyson *movie in London. McGuigan thinks "Del Boy" has a chance if he can nail Klitschko with a "big one."*

PHOTO BY JON FURNISS/WIREIMAGES

It's an interest for me on the side. It doesn't get in the way of my boxing, and it's something I can develop more, the business side of things, when my career in the ring is over."

Beat Klitschko, of course, and his career will only be getting started. But it is a foreboding prospect he faces against the world's premier heavyweight whose present modus operandi is to strangle the life out of his opposition by jabbing and dropping in heavy hooks and right hands before administering—rather effectively of late—the coup de grace. Illusory or not, Chisora appears unfazed by the 34-year-old champion's imposing stature, underlined effortlessly on a recent visit to London when the 6'6½" Ukrainian breezed in on the arm of his girlfriend, Hollywood actress Hayden Panettiere, as imperious as a modern-day Alexander.

"I've been in tough situations before," Chisora insisted, "such as the toughest night of my life when I fought Sam Sexton for the first time, a six-round fight at York Hall in Bethnal Green, and it went to the wire. In the fifth round, I blasted him, and he was saved by the bell. But I didn't want the judges to decide the outcome, so I thought, *I've got to stop him.* That night I dug deep, and the referee made a good stoppage. I know from a night such as this the potential that is within me. I'm not intimidated at all by challenging Wladimir Klitschko for the heavyweight title. I'm energized."

Can he win? "Well, he didn't expect to be world champion by Christmas but it's a possibility, however slim, if he lands the big one," insisted former WBA featherweight titleholder and Hall of Famer Barry McGuigan. If one shot is all he needs, as he predicts, Chisora better make it a good one. Otherwise the antiques collector and part-time car salesman could become part of an unedifying collection himself, that of the horizontal British heavyweight. ■

Brian Doogan is* THE RING*'s European correspondent.

POR LOS QUE SE ATREVEN A SUBIR AL RING

CON CARÁCTER

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K9 BUNDRAGE

The Underdog Who Wouldn't Give Up

By Joseph Santoliquito

Cornelius Bundrage thought he had finally arrived. Everything he had worked for was suddenly there, laid out right before him—the red-carpet affairs, the dog barks from fans that recognized him in places like London, England, the A-list treatment he received in his hometown of Detroit.

His appearance on the second season of the reality boxing show *The Contender*, in 2006, was certainly paying dividends. He got to hang out with all-time great Sugar Ray Leonard and hobnob with movie stars. He'd take an occasional step back and inhale everything. Finally, he reflected, he had made it. His nomad boxing existence of short-notice fights in small venues, while carrying "the opponent" designation was over.

Or so Bundrage thought.

Within a year of crushing Norberto Bravo to claim third place in *Contender II*, "K9" Bundrage was reduced to this: a porky, out-of-shape 187 pounds sitting on his living room

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

The 37-year-old Bundrage finally achieved his career-long goal of winning a major title belt when he stopped Cory Spinks to capture the IBF junior middleweight title in August 2010.

couch, wondering how he's going to pay his bills, and about to chomp down on a slice of pizza. That's when a call came to take a fight as a late replacement against Joel Julio.

He was told that if he wanted the fight, he had to get down to 151 in three weeks. He literally dropped what he was about to eat, put on his road gear, and went out running on a sweltering June night. As sweat poured down his face with each step, Bundrage felt he was right back where he had started.

Maybe it explains why Bundrage holds the IBF junior middleweight belt so tightly, the belt he won by fifth-round stoppage on August 7 against Cory Spinks, in Spinks' own backyard, at the St. Louis Scottrade Center.

K9 fought his entire career to burst through the journeyman bubble and was under the impression he did exactly that in '06 because of *The Contender*. Now, *he knows* he's attained a special status. It's something tangible, the result of a hardcore life on the hardcore Detroit streets and a relentless drive to never surrender to the politics and cold-hearted manipulations that can sometimes be prevalent in boxing.

Yes, after *The Contender*, more people were aware of the 37-year-old Bundrage, 30-4 (18) with 1 no-contest. There was just one thing missing—it didn't translate into money in his pocket or success in the ring.

"After the show, we all became pretenders, jokes, not fighters real boxing people respected. That was because *The Contender* people didn't know how to promote us," Bundrage said. "Mark Burnett and everyone that ran the show did a great job. The show was perfect, the best reality show I ever saw. It introduced the world to what fighters are really about. Burnett was great at it, but the people he had under him did a poor job. Those people didn't know what they were doing. They knew TV and they knew Hollywood, but they didn't know anything about boxing."

What Bundrage thought were two steps forward wound up being two steps back. According to K9, he was forced into certain fights and was told that if he didn't take those fights, his *Contender* contract would get dumped.

It didn't take long after the show wrapped up, when Grady Brewer beat Steve Forbes for the *Contender II* championship on September 26, 2006, that things started to unravel for Bundrage. He had a stack of bills at home that he had to address. The weekly *Contender* money was gone, and he was getting threats his electricity was about to be turned off.

It was a scary time—and right after what *he thought* was going to be a glorious time in his 15-year career. But his dire situation came with some culpability.

"I was a celebrity everywhere I went," K9 recalled. "People recognized me in England from the show and they'd bark and yell 'K9! K9!' when I walked past. I was all into it and the kibbles and bits that went with it. I was getting used up like a guinea pig, in my opinion. I was walking tall and living straight and had nothing really to show for it. I was spending more than I was receiving—and that's a little on me. I realize that. I thought I was a star after the show. It didn't go as planned. They gave me fights on short notice. I'll tell you this: I wouldn't do it again."

It's a contention Jeff Wald, who promoted *The Contender* fighters after the show and still works with former *Contender* participants Sergio Mora, Troy Ross, and Sakio Bika, vehemently denies.

"He's full of s___," Wald told THE RING. "K9 and his wife turned down $25,000 fights, and they told me Jesus would feed them. K9 doesn't fill seats. These guys all got inflated egos because they were on TV. They were given a launching pad. They had a following. We gave them an opportunity to go out and win. I'm angry about it and fed up with hearing it.

"We've done a good job with Sergio Mora, Steve Forbes, Troy Ross, Peter Manfredo, Sakio Bika, and Alfonso Gomez. We did a good job with K9. He has to keep himself in shape between fights. It's not my fault he blew up to 190 pounds. He has to take a fight on a couple of days notice; he was that guy. I am glad he got a belt and his dreams were fulfilled. I think he's a good kid. I'm happy for him and wish him more success. But these guys can complain all they want though. Where were they before *The Contender*?"

The apex of Bundrage's Contender *experience came when he stopped Norberto Bravo in the seventh round at the Staples Center in Los Angles, California, on September 26, 2006. The victory earned "K9" third place in the second season of the reality TV show.*

Before *The Contender*, before he found boxing, Bundrage was out on the streets in Detroit. He spawned a rough reputation there, selling drugs, stealing, delving into strong-arm robbery. You name it. It even led to a little time behind bars. He'd fill himself up with 40 ounces of courage and go on the prowl looking for mayhem.

That lifestyle led to K9 being shot at more than 20 times, the façade of his

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

home riddled with bullet holes. He grew up in a fierce part of Detroit where even Bloods and Crips wanted no parts.

"I wonder how I came through that time myself," Bundrage says today. "It was bad, real bad. My house was getting shot up almost every night it seemed. I'd get a call from my family, 'Yea, they shot up the house again.' You're in the drug trade; you have the neighborhood thinking you're going to take over, and they go after you. That was me. It's life or death. But I was stupid. I didn't know any better. I was a teenager, and this took me into my early-20s. It was about surviving day-to-day. That's the way I lived. I wanted the best of everything, and I was willing to do anything I could to get it. I wanted attention, and that's the way I got it."

Bundrage got it another way too—by knocking people out. He laughs at how he's depicted by some in the media, as a "club fighter." K9 was a club fighter all right, a *real club fighter.* He used to knock people out in nightclubs. He lets out a bellowing laugh when he brags about his "600-0" street record. He dabbled a little here and there with boxing, but not for a sustained period. There was always something else pulling him away, some little traipse into mischief … until one day opportunity literally drove up to him in a black Mercedes Benz.

Billy Summers was involved in the Detroit fight scene. He ran an amateur club and heard a lot of street talk about this K9 kid knocking out grown men. Summers had to find the kid and see for himself. He literally drove up to Bundrage and put out an invitation for K9 to come with him to the gym.

"I didn't even know what he looked like," said Summers, now based in Memphis, Tennessee, where he runs assisted-living homes. "I just drove up to these kids and asked if they knew anyone named K9 Bundrage. I got some strange looks,

because they were curious. They had no idea who I was."

It led K9 to the door of a different world. Apprehensive at first, Bundrage hopped in with Summers.

"I didn't know what to think, *maybe this guy was trying to roll up on us*, but, once he mentioned boxing and seeing him in the black Benz, I knew he was about business," K9 recalled. "That was it. That's what started me."

His pro career started well. K9 won his first 21 fights, 13 within the distance. Then everything seemed to turn sour when he met Sechew Powell, who was 15-0 at the time, on May 6, 2005, in Mashantucket, Connecticut, on a nationally televised *ShoBox* show. The fight didn't last very long, though it was memorable for the double-knockdown (that referee Dick Flaherty somehow managed to miss) in the opening seconds and for Powell's crushing right to K9's chin that pulled the plug on his senses—not to mention his equilibrium—and ended his unbeaten streak.

"After I lost that fight to Powell, that put me on the scrap heap," Bundrage said. "That's when *The Contender* came around for the second season. I turned down their offer for the first season because I thought it was a bunch of crap. But after losing that fight to Powell, I was broke; I was struggling. My promoter at the time wouldn't treat me the same anymore. They were trying to talk me into fights that I couldn't take."

After *The Contender*, Bundrage's next big chance came against Julio, in early-July '07. K9 was so depleted from dropping 37 pounds in three weeks that he had nothing by the time he climbed through the ropes. It showed. That was the nadir for Bundrage. Julio stopped him in eight. It looked like the end of his boxing career, but K9 still had some residual cache from *The Contender*—enough to still get calls.

Kassim Ouma, former IBF junior middleweight titlist, sought K9 out to build Ouma's comeback hopes, but instead Bundrage eked out a tight, 10-round unanimous decision in March '08. Following a split-decision loss to Grady Brewer in November 2008, K9 was hauled over to Mannheim, Germany to serve as fodder for undefeated Zaurbek Baysangurov in December '08. But Bundrage spoiled the grand scheme, scoring a stunning fifth-round TKO and setting up the chance to fight Yuri Foreman, in June '09, in an alphabet title eliminator.

With Foreman ahead on the scorecards early in the fight, the shorter, unwieldy Bundrage inadvertently butted Foreman, opening a gaping cut over his right eye. The fight was stopped after three rounds and ruled a no-contest. Right after, Bundrage called it quits with *The Contender* people, opting instead to sign with Don King, setting up the title shot against Spinks, a King fighter who had fought just once in a 27-month span.

By this time, Emanuel Steward had entered the picture as K9's new manager and trainer. He was working the corner when Bundrage dusted the rusty Spinks, dominating every moment of the fight until referee Mark Nelson waved it over at 1:28 after a knockdown in the fifth.

Finally, the kid who grew up down the street from the fabled Kronk Gym, the young man who led a wayward lifestyle as a teenager,

PHOTO BY MATTHEW LEWIS/GETTY IMAGES

His stint on* The Contender *made Bundrage a minor international celebrity. He is pictured here celebrating a seventh-round kayo of Colin McNeil in Newcastle, England, in March 2007.

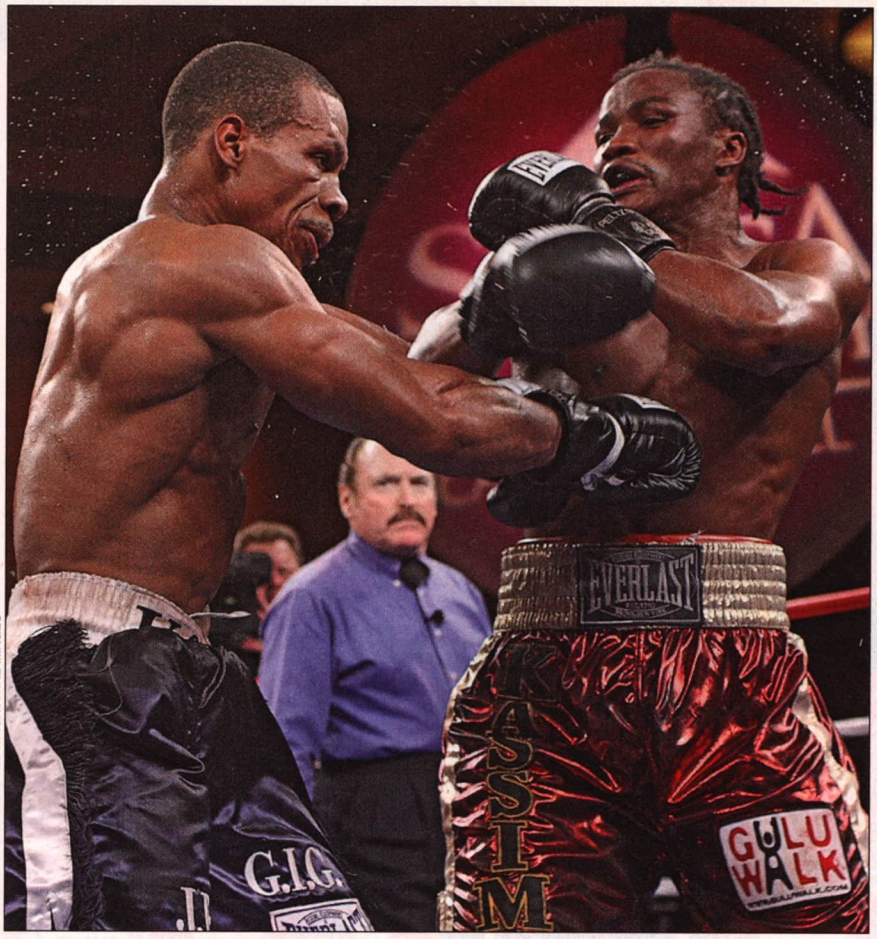

PHOTO BY STEVE SAMOYEDY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Bundrage seemed to be getting back on the right track when he won a close decision over former IBF 154-pound titleholder Kassim Ouma in March 2008, but inconsistency would soon derail his title hopes yet again.

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Tough luck continued to plague Bundrage when he lost a split 10-round decision to Grady Brewer in an eliminator for a minor alphabet belt in November 2008. It seemed as if K9 would never again achieve the success he'd enjoyed on The Contender*, but, three bouts later, he won the IBF title.*

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

In an audacious move, Bundrage called out Oscar De La Hoya, hoping "The Golden Boy" could be tempted to come out of retirement. The chances of that happening are virtually nonexistent, but you can't blame K9 for trying.

the man looking for an identity in his 20s, found solace with a blunt right hand.

Bundrage doesn't want to be a boxing drifter anymore. He's had plenty of those days already. Not long after beating Spinks, he was looking for a way to cash in on his new trinket and promptly called out Oscar De La Hoya, who's been retired since losing to Manny Pacquiao in December 2008.

"The Golden Boy" has no intention of coming out of retirement, and sources close to him say his schedule is filled running his various businesses and enjoying time with his family. But it's all right to think big. Bundrage has been doing it ever since he first put on gloves.

"It just makes sense," Bundrage tried to rationalize. "Fighting is in Oscar's blood, and I'm sure he's not happy with the way he went out. That has to be embarrassing for him to lose to a little guy like Pacquiao. Does Oscar want his legacy to end like that? I'm 37. I have a belt. I'm sure Oscar thinks he can beat me. I call myself the most underrated fighter of all-time. I have something now that people want. I'm a world champion. It's all I ever wanted." ■

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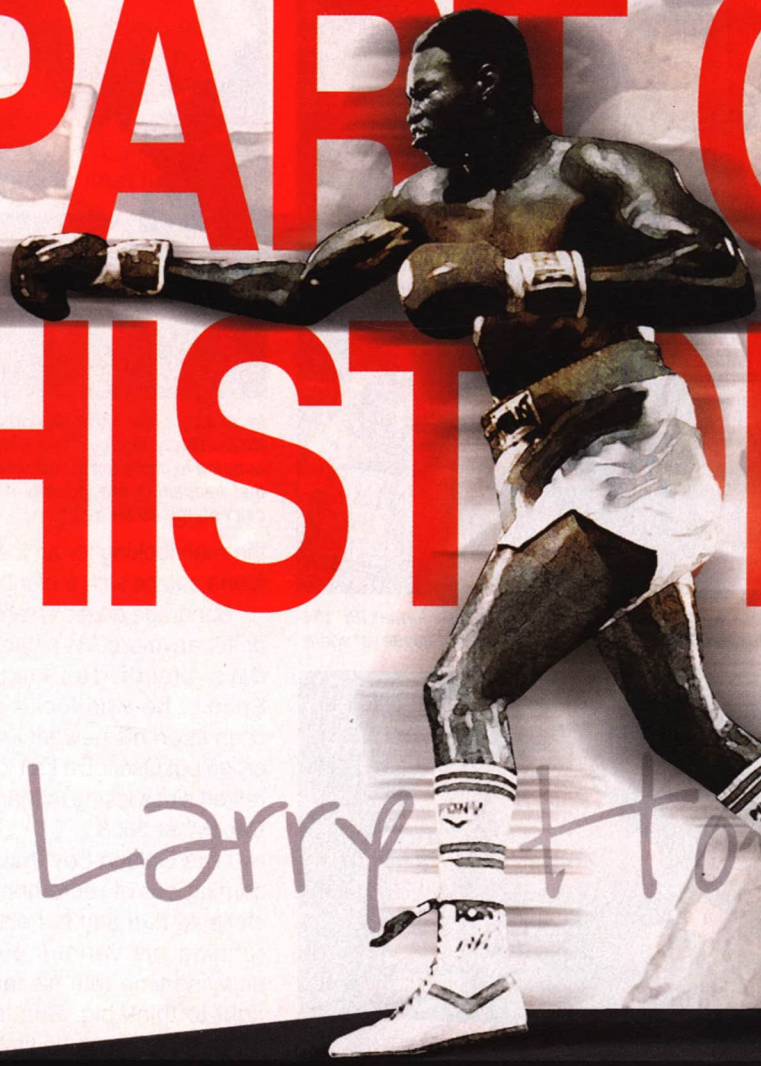

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Ranking The Best Fighters In The World

By William Dettloff

This is our 15th consecutive annual ranking of the 100 best fighters in the world, and, if you've been paying attention all these years, you've noticed some patterns. First, the fighters who get to the top five tend to stay there a long while. There's not an awful lot of turnover in that group, and that makes sense. If you're among the very best in the world, you've already demonstrated staying power, consistency, and world-class dedication.

That holds true this year as Manny Pacquiao, Floyd Mayweather, and Juan Manuel Marquez, all top-five guys last year and the year before and the year before that, are top-five guys this year. They simply are not subject to the vagaries to which the rest of us are. That's what makes them the best of the best.

Here's another sure thing: Sooner or later those guys will drop off, but it will be when they reach a very advanced age, not when they're still close to their prime. Bernard Hopkins, 45 years old and number four last year, takes a big tumble, as does Shane Mosley, age 39. They are supplanted by younger guys making their marks and doing very good work. They had very good runs, and, knowing those two, we wouldn't be shocked if we saw them again near the top someday, as unlikely as it seems now.

Some outside the top 10 suffered significant demotions too. Arthur Abraham, Mikkel Kessler, Kelly Pavlik, Rafael Marquez, and Ivan Calderon all drop more than a few rungs. This is due not to age in general, but to the frailties and indignities associated with being humans of standard-issue bodies and minds, at least as compared to those in the top five every year.

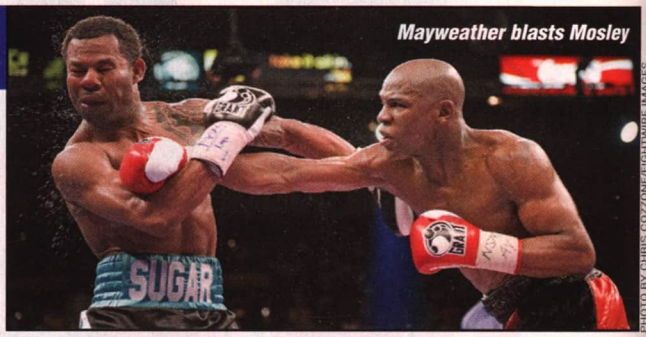
Inevitably, guys drop off this list. That's life. Roy Jones is gone. Edwin Valero too. Ricky Hatton as well, but that's the least of his worries. Cory Spinks, Joel Casamayor, Steve Luevano, Carlos Quintana, Kendall Holt, Verno Phillips, and more, all gone.

It's lucky for us that every time we turn around there's some young prospect out there knocking the bejesus out of everyone they put in front of him. That's what keeps this list interesting year after year after year. We hope you agree. *(Editor's note: These rankings are based on results for period ending October 24, 2010.)*

1. MANNY **PACQUIAO** Welterweight 51-3-2 (38)

Last Year's Ranking: 1
Status Report: By the time you read this, Pacquiao will likely have made mincemeat out of the bigger, stronger, ever-villainous Antonio Margarito, who not so long ago everyone was calling the most feared fighter in the world. It won't be Pacquiao's most impressive achievement since the previous RING 100; the bludgeoning of Miguel Cotto (KO 12) gets the nod there, and getting points, too, is the shutout he pitched against the highly competent, if reluctant, Joshua Clottey (W 12). Along with everyone else, we would have preferred the year to end with a superfight against the next guy on this list, but you can't have everything. As it is, Pacquiao comes awfully close.
Future: If the unthinkable has happened and Margarito has beaten Pacquiao, negotiations for the rematch are underway as you read this. If Pacquiao has won, there's only one guy we want to see him against next. Guess who?

2. FLOYD **MAYWEATHER** Welterweight 41-0 (25)



Mayweather blasts Mosley
PHOTO BY CHRIS GOZZON/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Last Year's Ranking: 2
Status Report: It's hard to maintain a ranking as high as this fighting just once in all of 2010, but Mayweather did it. How? By outclassing Shane Mosley. And he did it by standing right in Mosley's grill, more or less, and outfighting him. That Mayweather was rocked in the second round and came back to dominate every second of every round thereafter with the same ease as he did against Juan Manuel Marquez, is proof enough that Mayweather remains, at worst, the second-best fighter on the planet.
Future: Every time we think we have Mayweather figured out, he does something that seems nonsensical to the rest of us, but look where he is and where we are. Who's smarter? Aside from the legal matters that will likely have faded entirely away by the time you read this, he's made the right move for Floyd Mayweather every single time. But he knows this: He must fight Pacquiao. In 2011, he will.

3. JUAN MANUEL **MARQUEZ** World Lightweight Champion 51-5-1 (37)

Last Year's Ranking: 5
Status Report: Not many thought Marquez was really as bad as he looked in his loss to Mayweather near the end of 2009, but when he took off a full 10 months before getting in the ring again, you had to wonder. But there he was again in July, handing poor Juan Diaz another boxing lesson (W 12), and, by the time you read this, he will very likely have done the same to the comparatively young (30) and very tenacious Michael Katsidis in another defense of the straight-up lightweight world title. We don't know how much longer Marquez can be Marquez, but this much should already be decided: He has a room reserved in Canastota.
Future: Marquez seems as hungry and ambitious now as he ever has. Call him a late bloomer. And if he gets past Katsidis, which he should, don't be surprised if Amir Khan is next.

4. NONITO **DONAIRE** Junior Bantamweight 24-1 (16)

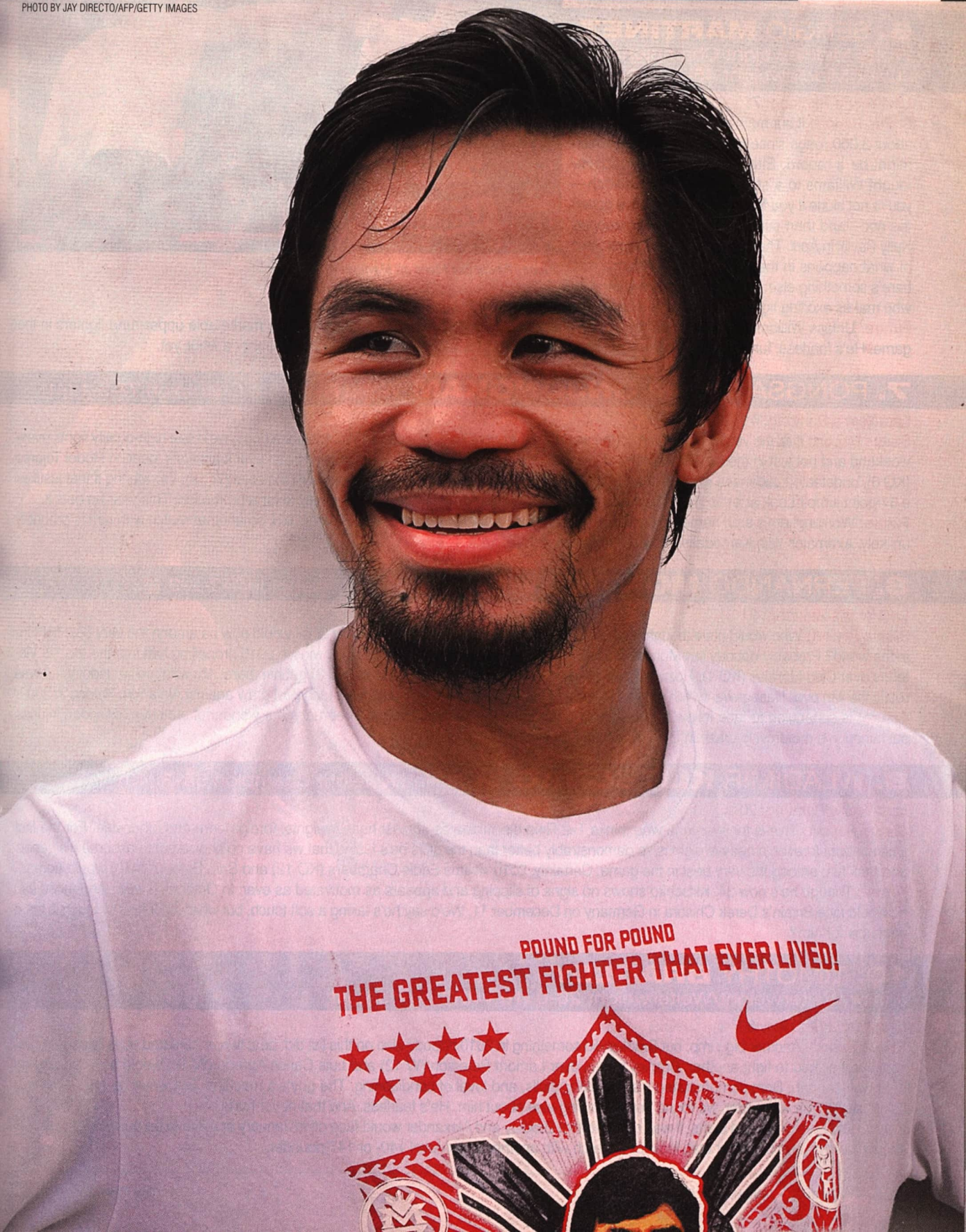
Last Year's Ranking: 6
Status Report: Donaire was scheduled to face Wladimir Sidorenko on December 4 as we went to press, his third fight of 2010—quite busy indeed for a top pound-for-pounder these days. We wouldn't mind if the level of competition was as ambitious as the schedule; Manuel Vargas (KO 3) and Hernan Marquez (KO 8) were pretty much no-hopers. Sidorenko is a welcome step up, if not a huge one.
Future: Provided he gets by Sidorenko, which we imagine he will, Donaire is scheduled to meet Fernando Montiel in one of the best matchups that can be made today. Montiel probably qualifies as the best fighter Donaire has ever faced, and what happens when they meet will go a long way toward determining where Donaire appears on this list next year.

5. PAUL **WILLIAMS** Middleweight 39-1 (27)

Last Year's Ranking: 11
Status Report: By the time you read this, Williams' rematch with Sergio Martinez will be history, and we'll either have made a lucky guess by rating him over Martinez here or will once again have been done in by dastardly lead times. Either way, Williams had an interesting 2010 even before the Martinez rematch: an all-out punch-a-thon with Martinez in the first match (W 12) that said both good and bad about "The Punisher" and then a curious and not altogether inspired win over Kermit Cintron (Tech. Dec. 4).
Future: Here's what 2011 will *not* include for Williams: a match with Floyd Mayweather, Manny Pacquiao, Andre Ward, or any other fighter who practices at or around 147 pounds. Here's what it will include: a rubber match with Martinez, if Martinez wins the rematch. If Williams wins, maybe he gets Kelly Pavlik.

1 MANNY PACQUIAO

PHOTO BY JAY DIRECTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



6. SERGIO MARTINEZ
World Middleweight Champion/
Junior Middleweight 45-2-2 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 71
Status Report: If our math is right, Martinez jumped about 3,000 rungs since last year's analysis, which might be a record. Either way, it's deserved. He fought Williams to a standstill in the first match—you're not alone if you thought he should have gotten the nod—and then cut up and damn near stopped Kelly Pavlik in April. That's a hell of a year regardless of what happens in the rematch with Williams, and here's something else: He's a fast, mobile southpaw who makes exciting fights. When was the last time that happened?
Future: Unless Williams has blown him away in the rematch, Martinez remains among the more marketable upper-rung fighters in the game. He's fearless, fun to watch, viable at either 154 or 160, and a heck of a fighter. You'll see him for a while yet.

PHOTO BY: EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Bloody Pavlik can't fend off Martinez

7. PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM World Flyweight Champion 77-3-1 (41)

Last Year's Ranking: 41
Status Report: If all the very good fighters in the world went to work as frequently as Wonjongkam does, we'd see high-quality fights every weekend and not just in the last two months of the year. Wonjongkam fought four times since last year's analysis, beating Rodel Tejares (KO 6), undefeated Japanese star Koki Kameda (W 12), Rey Migrino (KO 1), and Suriyan Por Chokchai (W 12). Wondering if that justifies a 34-point jump? Look at it this way: The Kameda fight was big, and Wonjongkam was overdue for a promotion. This year he gets it.
Future: Wonjongkam's arch nemesis, Daisuke Naito, lost to Kameda in 2009 and is 36 years old, so another match with him is probably unlikely. A rematch with Kameda isn't out of the question.

8. FERNANDO MONTIEL WBC Bantamweight Titleholder 43-2-2 (33)

Last Year's Ranking: 21
Status Report: Who would have thought that the guy who froze against Mark Johnson in 2003 would now be among the very best fighters in the world? Probably nobody but Montiel himself. Here he is anyway, with a trio of good wins in 2010 propelling him into the top 10. Victories over Ciso Morales (KO 1), Hozumi Hasegawa (KO 4), and Rafael Concepcion (KO 3) get him here. Ah, who are we kidding? It was really the win over Hasegawa, which also rid Montiel of the stink left from his suspicious technical draw against Alejandro Valdez in 2009.
Future: Is scheduled to face fellow tiny pound-for-pound entrant Nonito Donaire in February in a wonderful matchup, provided injuries sustained in a motorcycle crash in October don't force a delay.

9. WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO World Heavyweight Champion 55-3 (49)

Last Year's Ranking: 20
Status Report: This is for everyone who thinks THE RING discriminates against heavyweights, foreign-born and otherwise. For the first time in about forever, a heavyweight is so demonstrably better than the stiffs he's facing that we have no choice but to assume his genius and rank him among the very best in the game. Certainly, 2010 victims Eddie Chambers (KO 12) and Sam Peter (KO 10) would agree.
Future: Though he's now 34, Klitschko shows no signs of slipping and appears as motivated as ever. In October, it was announced that he would face Britain's Derek Chisora in Germany on December 11. We'd say he's taking a soft touch, but what other kind of touch is there right now for him?

10. TIMOTHY BRADLEY
Junior Welterweight/Welterweight 26-0 (11) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 30
Status Report: Another big jump, but Bradley did something in 2010 nobody else on this list did: beat two undefeated guys in consecutive fights and signed to fight another. Bradley's wins over Lamont Peterson (W 12) and Luis Carlos Abregu (W 12) would have gotten him here well enough. Both demonstrated his versatility, skills, and level of conditioning. The guy's a machine. But when he agreed to face rising star Devon Alexander, we found out something else about him. He's fearless. And that never hurts.
Future: After many fits and starts, it was reported that Bradley and Alexander would face off in January at a site to be determined. Bradley should win that one big. After that, look for a match with another upper-level 140- or 147-pounder.

9 WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

PHOTO BY CHRISTOF KOEPSEL/BONARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Cotto attacks Foreman

PGOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

11. MIGUEL COTTO
Welterweight/Junior Middleweight
35-2 (28)

Last Year's Ranking: 7
Status Report: There's a reason most fighters don't want to face the best guys out there all the time: It's a good way to get your head handed to you. Cotto, bless his heart, has never run from a good fight, and that's why Manny Pacquiao beat him senseless (KO by 12) in one of 2009's bigger events. Cotto was never in it after the second round, but he looked as good as new pulverizing gimpy, feather-fisted Yuri Foreman (KO 9) the next time out. Let the other guys talk about retirement. Cotto's not going anywhere.
Future: Bob Arum can threaten all he wants to make Pacquiao-Cotto II, but even he can't sell it. We know it, and he knows it. He's been talking a lot about Cotto-Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. too. That's even less competitive. So who's he really thinking about putting in with Cotto? Try Vanes Martirosyan.

12. CELESTINO CABALLERO Featherweight 34-2 (23)

Last Year's Ranking: 8
Status Report: By the time you read this, Caballero will almost certainly have punched the living daylights out of poor Jason Litzau, who is a nice kid with a good story but with neither the chin nor the smarts to last a full 36 minutes with a killer like Caballero. It will be Caballero's second win of 2010; his pummeling of tough Daud Yordan (W 12) had the HBO broadcast team crying for the referee to stop it shortly after the playing of the national anthems. The guy's a beast. We just wish he'd fight a little more frequently.
Future: There was some talk a while back about Caballero facing Juan Manuel Lopez or Yuriorkis Gamboa. Forget about it. He's too dangerous. We'd be almost as happy to see him against Orlando Salido or Daniel Ponce De Leon.

13. VITALI KLITSCHKO WBC Heavyweight Titleholder 41-2 (38)

Last Year's Ranking: 22
Status Report: Two heavyweights in the top 20? Have we gone mad? Maybe. But you just can't deny anymore that the elder Klitschko, as ungainly, awkward, and stiff-legged as he seems, is one of the best in the world at what he does, which is beat up really bad heavyweights. In fact, the only guy better than him at it is his brother. Even if he's starting to creak a little—he is 39, after all—Big Brother belongs here. Kevin Johnson (W 12), Albert Sosnowski (KO 10), and Shannon Briggs (W 12) can't be wrong.
Future: He denies it publicly, but retirement for the big guy is not far down the road. He and Wladimir seem to be in a longevity contest, and this Vitali cannot win. We see two more fights for Vitali, maybe three and then out.

14. JEAN PASCAL World Light Heavyweight Champion 26-1 (16)

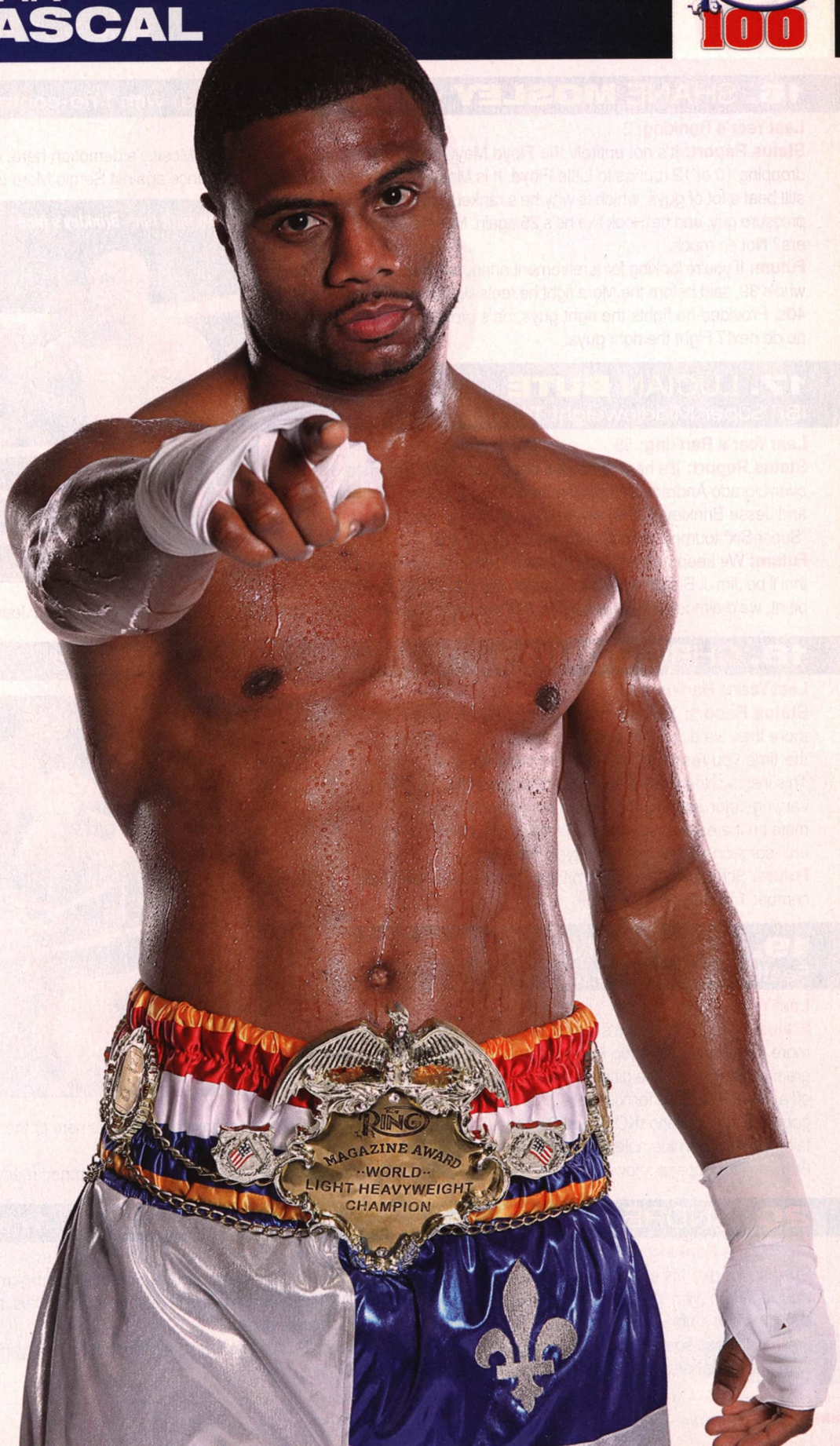
Last Year's Ranking: 61
Status Report: Another big jump here, but Pascal earned it, beating Adrian Diaconu (W 12) in their rematch and then upsetting Chad Dawson (Tech. Win 11) to claim the vacant world light heavyweight title. You can say Dawson fought the wrong fight or that he lost it more than Pascal won it, but that's nitpicking. Pascal did what he had to do, which was kick Dawson's butt. That counts for something. In fact, it counts for a lot.
Future: Scheduled to meet Bernard Hopkins on December 18 in Quebec City, Quebec.

15. HOZUMI HASEGAWA Bantamweight 28-3 (12)

Last Year's Ranking: 12
Status Report: Hasegawa remains a world-class performer but drops three rungs based on his surprisingly poor showing against Fernando Montiel (KO by 4). Sure Montiel can crack, but we expected more from this guy. In his only other appearance of the period, Hasegawa beat Alvara Perez (KO 4). By the time you read this, he will have met undefeated Juan Carlos Burgos, reportedly for the vacant WBC featherweight title.
Future: We're doubtful Hasegawa can be as effective at 126 as he was at 118. That's a lot of weight, relatively speaking, for a guy the size of a one of Nicolay Valuev's skin tags.

14 JEAN PASCAL

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME



16. SHANE MOSLEY Welterweight 46-6-1 (39) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 3

Status Report: It's not entirely the Floyd Mayweather fight (L 12) that results in Mosley's demotion here. After all, there's no shame in dropping 10 of 12 rounds to Little Floyd. It is Mosley's mostly ineffectual performance against Sergio Mora (D 12) too. "Sugar Shane" will still beat a lot of guys, which is why he's ranked where he is. Give him a pressure guy, and he'll look like he's 25 again. Movers and counterpunchers? Not so much.

Future: If you're looking for a retirement announcement, forget it. Mosley, who's 39, said before the Mora fight he feels like he can fight well into his 40s. Provided he fights the right guys, he's probably right. So what will he do next? Fight the right guys.

Bute's right finds Brinkley's face

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

17. LUCIAN BUTE
IBF Super Middleweight Titleholder 27-0 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 58

Status Report: It's hard to have a better year than Bute had. His wins over Librado Andrade in their rematch (KO 4), Edison Miranda (KO 3), and Jesse Brinkley (KO 9) were as good as anything anyone did in the "Super Six" tourney, which is why he jumps 41 spots.

Future: We keep hearing Bute will face the winner of the Super Six, but that'll be Jim J. Bullock or Ryan Seacrest the way things are going. At this point, we'd almost prefer he jump to 175 and face one of the top guys there, especially fellow Canadian Jean Pascal.

18. CHRIS JOHN WBA Featherweight Titleholder 43-0-2 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 17

Status Report: You can make a case for demoting John more than we did; he'll have been inactive for 14 months by the time you read this, purportedly because of a rib injury. This inspired the WBA to hand out featherweight title belts of varying color and significance to every upright-walking primate on the eastern seaboard, but that's not John's fault. And until someone beats him he stays on this list.

Future: Scheduled to face Fernando David Saucedo on December 1 in Bali.

"JuanMa" sends Concepcion to the canvas

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

19. JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ
Featherweight 29-0 (26)

Last Year's Ranking: 29

Status Report: Bob Arum's latest Puerto Rican star will have more than likely beaten up Rafael Marquez by the time your greasy little fingers have dirtied up this fine publication, topping off a fine year indeed for "JuanMa." His victories over the very good Steven Lueveno (KO 7) and Bernabe Concepcion (KO 2) were not without anxious moments here or there, but this is an exceptionally talented kid just vulnerable enough to keep us on the edge of our seats.

Future: The hope: a showdown with Yurorkis Gamboa. The reality: not until Arum is good and damned ready.

20. ANDRE WARD WBA Super Middleweight Titleholder 22-0 (13)

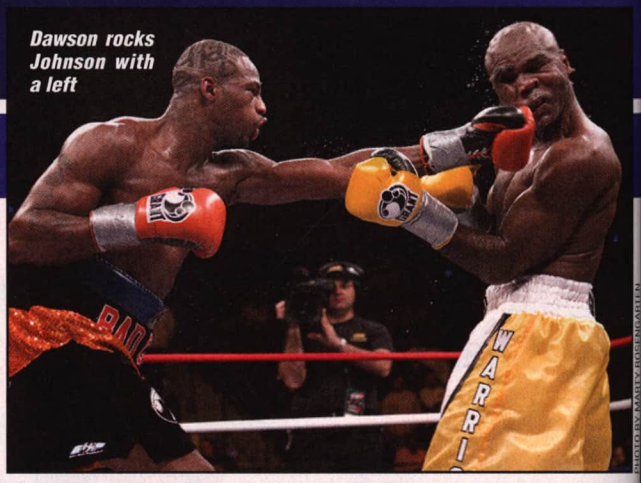
Last Year's Ranking: Unranked

Status Report: It's a surprise to most of us that Ward has emerged as the star of the "Super Six" tournament, beating favorite Mikkel Kessler (Tech. Win 11) and then, less surprisingly, late entrant Allan Green (W 12). By the time you read this, he probably will have beaten Sakio Bika in a non-Super Six bout. That's a heck of a year in anyone's book.

Future: Unless something unusual happens, Ward wins the Super Six tournament. He's the most athletic and maybe the hungriest fighter in there. It's hard to picture any of the remaining guys beating him.

20 ANDRE WARD

PHOTO BY LAURA DE LA TORRE


Dawson rocks Johnson with a left

21. CHAD DAWSON
Light Heavyweight 29-1 (17) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 16
Status Report: It must have been fun being Dawson when he finally gave in to the media's insistence that he fight Glen Johnson again and promptly beat him clearly and without controversy (W 12). We imagine it was less fun when Jean Pascal upset him in Montreal and beat him to capture the world light heavyweight title (Tech. Loss 11). But that's just a guess.
Future: A rematch with Pascal, assuming Pascal gets by Bernard Hopkins. If Hopkins wins, he will avoid Dawson like he's clinch repellant.

22. ANDRE BERTO WBC Welterweight Titleholder 26-0 (20)

Last Year's Ranking: 37
Status Report: There's every likelihood that Berto will have beaten Freddy Hernandez by the time you read this, and our response will be: So what? Berto remains undeniably talented, as his demolition of Carlos Quintana (KO 8) demonstrated, and has every gift one could want in a fighter and maybe a few you wouldn't. For example, it's not his fault there was an earthquake in Haiti, but he would have taken a giant step forward fighting and beating Shane Mosley when he had the chance.
Future: Berto's still a relative baby at just 27 years old, but, cripes, what's he waiting for? The welterweight division is full of very good fighters, including him. Let's see him against Josh Clottey or Jan Zaveck if he can't get Mayweather or Pacquiao. It's a start.

Marquez drops Vazquez

23. RAFAEL MARQUEZ
Featherweight 39-5 (35)

Last Year's Ranking: 10
Status Report: This is a big tumble for one of the game's most respected warriors, but it's just. Marquez fought only once since last year's analysis, obliterating rival Israel Vazquez (KO 3) who looked entirely shot. (Though we imagine we have to give Marquez credit for making him shot.) Marquez' resume gets him here, though we suspect he will have lost to power-punching Juan Manuel Lopez by the time you read this.
Future: If he has lost to Lopez in their fight in Las Vegas, it would be as good a time as any for Marquez, who is 35 years old, to walk away. Don't count on it, not so long as his brother is still winning big fights.

24. YURIORKIS GAMBOA IBF Featherweight Titleholder 19-0 (15)

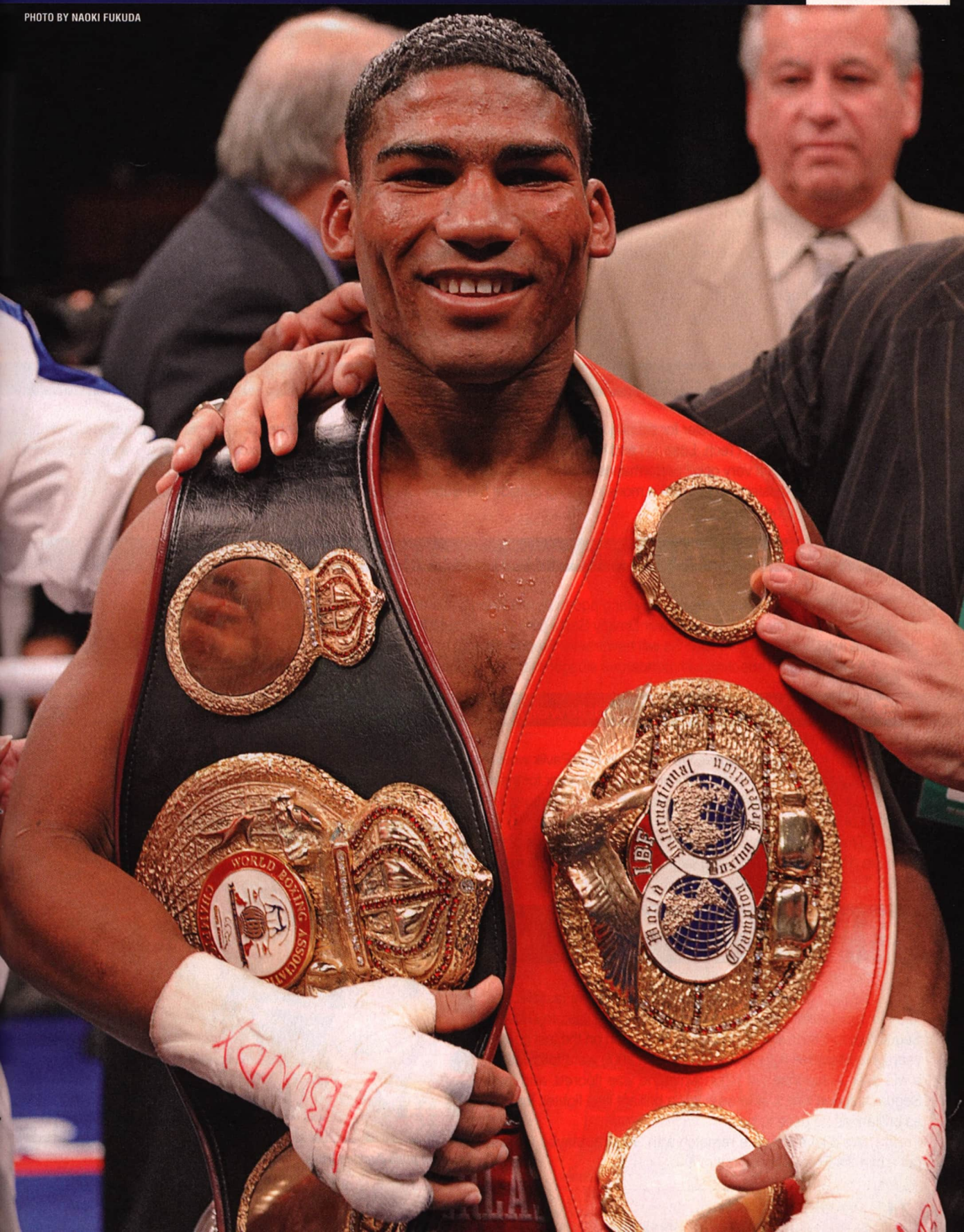
Last Year's Ranking: 76
Status Report: In the course of 12 months, Gamboa went from gifted but amateurish prospect to IBF titleholder, so there's real progress there. How'd he do it? A new trainer and a bit more discipline led him to wins over Rogers Mtagwa (KO 2), Jonathan Victor Barros (W 12), and the very good Orlando Salido (W 12).
Future: Gamboa is a special talent. He and JuanMa are going to make beautiful music together someday.

25. GIOVANI SEGURA World Junior Flyweight Champion 25-1-1 (21)

Last Year's Ranking: 78
Status Report: What a year for Segura. Wins over Walter Tello (KO 3) and Ronald Ramos (KO 4) were good enough, but then he stops the undefeated and wonderful Ivan Calderon (KO 8) to secure the championship. This guy isn't pretty in there, but he can punch and he's all fighter. Those two things will take him a long way.
Future: A rematch with Calderon is possible, and who'd mind that? A shootout with Rodel Mayol or Ulises Solis might be even more fun.

24 YURIORKIS GAMBOA

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA



26. BERNARD HOPKINS
Light Heavyweight 51-5-1 (32) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 4
Status Report: It's not often a guy drops 21 spots after a win, but it feels right here given Hopkins' odd and dispirited showing against Roy Jones (W 12). He was better against Enrique Ornelas (W 10), but it just might be that finally, at age 45, he's no longer one of the 20 best fighters on the planet. Like that's a crime. At his age, most of us get winded making a sandwich.
Future: A December 18 meeting with Jean Pascal, in Canada, for the world light heavyweight title. Watch him pull it off.

Hopkins finally avenges loss to Jones

27. MIKKEL KESSLER WBC Super Middleweight Titleholder 43-2 (32)

Last Year's Ranking: 19
Status Report: We'll forgive Kessler for starting the stampede that left the "Super Six" tourney a shell of its former ambitious self, and note that his loss to Andre Ward (Tech. Loss 11) and his razor-thin win over Carl Froch (W 12) both were exciting bouts that revealed the sorry truth that he gave his last very good performance against Joe Calzaghe. It won't get better from here. Hence the demotion.
Future: At just 31, Kessler can still make money fighting outside the Super Six tournament once his eye injury has healed, and he will, against soft WBC mandatories.

28. AMIR KHAN WBA Junior Welterweight Titleholder 23-1 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 42
Status Report: It was fashionable not very long ago to deride Khan's soft chin, but one has to reach it to dent it, and the maturing Khan doesn't permit that very often. In wins over Dmitriy Salita (KO 1) and Paul Malignaggi (KO 11), Khan was hardly touched. Soft chin or not, his offense will take him a long way. So will new trainer Freddie Roach.
Future: A December 11 meeting with ponderous slugger Marcos Maidana, which Khan should win outright.

29. KELLY PAVLIK Middleweight 36-2 (32)

Last Year's Ranking: 15
Status Report: You were supposed to have read how Pavlik would have splashed Bryan Vera all over Cowboys Stadium, but Pavlik dropped out of the fight due to injured ribs. It continued a rough year for the former world middleweight champion. An easy title defense against Miguel Espino (KO 5) was followed by a bloody loss to Sergio Martinez in a fight Pavlik was winning, lest we forget, until Martinez opened a cut the size of all of Ohio over Pavlik's eye.
Future: That's uncertain. Speculation is Pavlik could have other issues to deal with before getting back in the ring. Maybe a move to 168. That won't be any easier.

30. IVAN CALDERON
Junior Flyweight 34-1-1 (6)

Last Year's Ranking: 14
Status Report: One of the best pure boxers of the last decade takes a substantial drop here, not due just to his loss to Giovani Segura but to the downward trajectory he's been on the last couple years. His struggles against Rodel Mayol in 2009 were followed by a win over Jesus Iribe (W 12) in which he was floored, and then Segura stopped him. Calderon is still a brilliant little fighter, just not as brilliant as he used to be.
Future: We'd love to see a rematch with Segura. Maybe we can get a mini Ali-Frazier series out of it.

Calderon pops ducking Iribe

28 AMIR KHAN

The Ring 100

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

31. ANTONIO MARGARITO Welterweight 38-6 (27) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 23
Status Report: The great likelihood is that Manny Pacquiao will have beaten Margarito into something resembling spoiled hamburger meat by the time you read this, but that doesn't mean Margarito can't fight. He didn't look great in his comeback win over Roberto Garcia (W 10), but you don't see guys lining up to face him. Until proven otherwise, Margarito remains a threat to anyone doing business around 150 pounds.
Future: There are lots of Top Rank-promoted guys around Margarito's weight. If he happens to look really awful against Pacquiao, maybe he gets on Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.'s dance card.

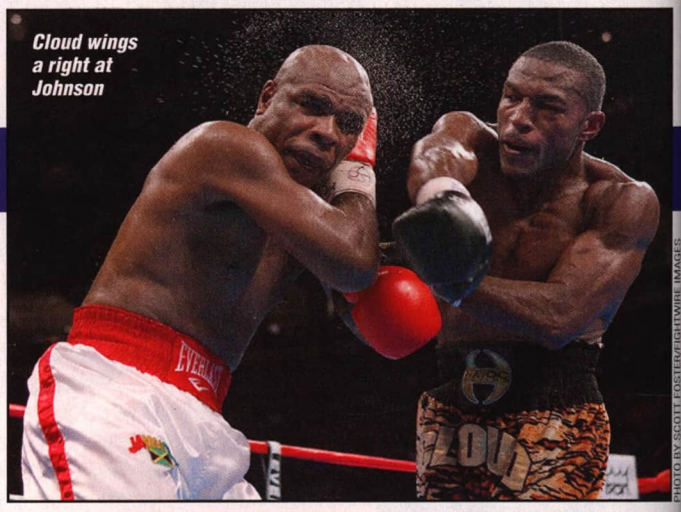

Cloud wings a right at Johnson

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

32. TAVORIS CLOUD
IBF Light Heavyweight Titleholder 21-0 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: 98
Status Report: Cloud's win over Glen Johnson (W 12) gets him a long way, as it should. You can make the argument that Johnson outworked him, but there was only one guy who wobbled around the ring a few times that night, and it wasn't Cloud. This guy can crack and shows up in shape to punch hard for all 12 rounds. He's going to be hard to beat. And at just 28 years old, he's got time to do damage.
Future: At this writing is scheduled to face Fulgencio Zuniga on December 17 in Miami. We like him to win.

33. CARL FROCH Super Middleweight 26-1 (21)

Last Year's Ranking: 59
Status Report: Even if he has lost to Arthur Abraham by the time you read this, Froch earned our respect last year—and not just because he has the hottest girlfriend in all of boxing. In close, exciting struggles with Andre Dirrell (W 12) and Mikkel Kessler (L 12) that could have gone either way, Froch showed grit, poise, and a fighter's mentality, even if he lacks real athleticism. And his win over Jean Pascal in 2008 looks better than ever.
Future: Depends entirely on the outcome of his fight with Arthur Abraham. Another loss is very damaging.

34. HUMBERTO SOTO
WBC Lightweight Titleholder
53-7-2 (32) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 33
Status Report: On paper, Soto had a very solid and busy year, with victories over Jesus Chavez (W 10), David Diaz (W 12), Ricardo Dominguez (W 12), and Fidel Munoz (W 12). You can't ask for more than that, right? Well, yes, you can. He hasn't stopped anyone since moving up from 130 pounds. That's discouraging for a guy who could crack the way he could at junior lightweight. Still, he remains one of the best 135-pounders in the world that can't get a very big fight. Thank you very much, Bob Arum.
Future: Scheduled to meet once-beaten Urbano Antillon in California on December 4.

Soto drills Diaz with a left

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

35. ROBERT GUERRERO Lightweight 27-1-1(18) with 2 no-contests

Last Year's Ranking: 39
Status Report: Guerrero will have met Vicente Escobedo in an interesting match in Newark, New Jersey, by the time you read this, and a win would end the year on a high note. Victories over Robert Arrieta (KO 8) and a completely shot Joel Casamayor (W 10) did little to advance his career, but Guerrero can fight.
Future: It's time for Guerrero to make a strong move. The match with Escobedo is a good start.

35 ROBERT GUERRERO

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

36. VIC DARCHINYAN
WBC, WBA Junior Bantamweight Titleholder
35-2-1 (27)

Last Year's Ranking: 53
Status Report: Darchinyan's activity gets him a promotion. He won three straight after dropping a decision to Joseph Agbeko, beating Tomas Rojas (KO 2), Rodrigo Guerrero (W 12), and Eric Barcelona (W 12). None of those guys are world-beaters; call it quantity over quality. Darchinyan also gets points for signing on for Showtime's bantamweight tourney.
Future: A potentially explosive match against upstart Abner Mares on December 11 in Showtime's bantamweight tournament. Can't wait for that one.

Rojas avoids Darchinyan's left
PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

37. STEVE CUNNINGHAM
IBF Cruiserweight Titleholder 23-2 (12)

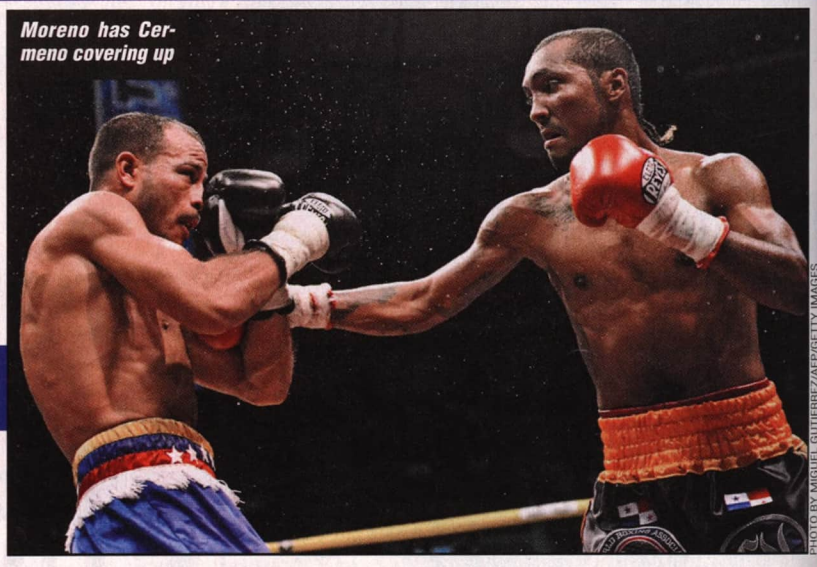
Last Year's Ranking: 34
Status Report: The good news: Cunningham finally got out of his contract with Don King. The bad news: He signed with Sauerland Event, which means virtually all of his fights will take place in Europe. The first example: his win over Troy Ross (KO 5) for an alphabet strap, which went down in Germany.
Future: Cunningham is almost certainly the best cruiserweight in the world now that Tomasz Adamek is a heavyweight. He deserves the chance to prove it frequently.

38. GLEN JOHNSON Light Heavyweight 50-14-2 (34)

Last Year's Ranking: 18
Status Report: By the time you read this, Johnson will have faced Allan Green in the "Super Six" tournament, and regardless of the outcome, he remains a dependable, higher-quality fighter. His rematch with Chad Dawson didn't go as planned (L 12), but he flattened young Yusef Mack (KO 6) and lost close and hard to 27-year-old Tavoris Cloud (L 12). There is not a tougher, harder-working guy in this game. Still.
Future: We don't see him winning the tournament, but he'll give hell to every guy he fights.

39. ANSELMO MORENO WBA Bantamweight Titleholder 30-1-1 (10)

Last Year's Ranking: 38
Status Report: Moreno is still one of the busier titleholders in the sport, which we guess you have to be as one of the WBA's ubiquitous super-duper championship beltholders, but it's gotten a little dicey for him lately. He stopped Frederic Patrac (KO 11) but just scraped by Nehomar Cermeno twice (W 12, W 12). He's just 25 years old so he shouldn't be slowing down already.
Future: We'd like to see him settle unfinished business with Cermeno


Moreno has Cermeno covering up
PHOTO BY MIGUEL GUTIERREZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

40. KOKI KAMEDA
Flyweight 23-1 (15)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: The Japanese star breaks into the top-50 based on a win over Daisuke Naito, a close loss to Pongsaklek Wonjongkam, and a comeback victory over Cecilio Santos. The critics were hoping Kameda would fall apart when he finally stepped up. He didn't. That's why he's here.
Future: There will always be an audience for loudmouths who can back up their boasts, thank goodness, hence there will be an audience for Kameda.

41. ANDRE **DIRRELL** Super Middleweight 19-1 (13)

Last Year's Ranking: 68
Status Report: There was only one thing Dirrell could do to negate all the good will he earned with his upset win over Arthur Abraham (W DQ 11): quit the "Super Six" tournament. And that's what he did. Maybe the claims about his neurological problems are true. Even so, it remains that the match against Andre Ward was troubled from the very start, and those who said it wouldn't happen were proved correct.
Future: Dirrell will fight again but not at the level he would have if he'd stayed in the tournament. A bummer for everyone.

42. ARTHUR **ABRAHAM** Super Middleweight 31-1 (25)

Last Year's Ranking: 13
Status: Abraham will have met Carl Froch by the time the arrival of this magazine in your mailbox makes you dance in your driveway, and we imagine Froch's limited mobility will have resulted in a win for "King Arthur." Still, how the mighty have fallen. Abraham was thoroughly outboxed by Andre Dirrell and then clubbed Dirrell when he was down, resulting in an embarrassing disqualification loss (L DQ 11). Also, cripes, how about throwing a punch once in a while, Artie?
Future: More "Super Six" hoopla unless Abraham finds a way to bail too.

Gonzalez throws a right at Rosas
PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

43. ROMAN **GONZALEZ** Junior Flyweight 27-0 (23)

Last Year's Ranking: 35
Status Report: Gonzalez remained busy over the last year, but the quality of his opposition plummeted, hence the demotion. He beat Ivan Meneses (KO 4), Jesus Limones (KO 2), and, in October, Francisco Rojas (KO 2) for some alleged interim belt or some such at junior fly.
Future: Now rated at junior fly, wouldn't a showdown with Giovani Segura be fun?

44. JORGE **LINARES** Junior Lightweight 30-1 (19)

Last Year's Ranking: 43
Status Report: Linares, who stopped shopworn Jesus Chavez (KO 4) just prior to the deadline for this issue, gets a small bump up based on the work he's gotten done following his kayo loss to Juan Carlos Salgado in Tokyo in 2009. Namely, the wide decision he won over veteran contender Rocky Juarez (W 10) in July. Everyone's beaten Juarez, you say? True enough. But at the end, most were hanging on for dear life—including Chris John. Linares suffered no such drama. Moreover, he knocked Juarez down.
Future: Anyone else see the parallels between Linares and Amir Khan? We do too. Here's another: A year from now, Linares will be much higher on this list.

Angulo kayos Yorgey
PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

45. ALFREDO **ANGULO** Junior Middleweight 19-1 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Angulo rebounded from his puzzling loss to Kermit Cintron in 2009 with impressive wins over Gabriel Rosado (KO 2), Harry Joe Yorgey (KO 3), Joel Julio (KO 11), and Joachime Alcine (KO 1). That's enough to get him in the discussion and then some.
Future: Several sources reported in late September that Angulo was found to have been residing in the United States illegally and was being deported. If true, it throws a fat monkey wrench into his burgeoning title hopes. Plus, no guy this talented should be sitting on his hands, or, even worse, fighting in a place where we can't watch.

Cazares cracks Nashiro en route to title belt

46. HUGO CAZARES
Junior Bantamweight 33-6-2 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 44
Status Report: Cazares keeps plugging along. Wins over Nobuo Nashiro (W 12), Everardo Morales (KO 7), and Alberto Rossel (KO 9) keep him from losing much ground and also mark him as one of the more consistent and reliable contenders in the business.
Future: The only guy to beat Cazares over the last 10 years is Ivan Calderon. Now that Calderon is over the hill, we guess it's safe to say Cazares can be expected to keep winning over the next what, 10, 20 years?

47. SERGIO MORA Junior Middleweight 22-1-2 (6)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: You can laugh at Mora all you want, there's more to this business than being able to knock a guy's brain loose. Whether or not you agreed with the decision, Mora demonstrated against Shane Mosley (D 12) that he can stay on even terms with a world-class fighter and, on his better nights, maybe beat him. "The Latin Snake" also beat Calvin Green (KO 7) in April.
Future: Mora is hopeful, as we are, that his new promoter, Golden Boy Promotions, will keep him active. There's no good reason a fighter as good as Mora shouldn't be working consistently, regardless of whether or not he's a knockout puncher.

Adamek moves in on Estrada

48. TOMASZ ADAMEK
Heavyweight 42-1 (27)

Last Year's Ranking: 31
Status Report: We know this looks all wrong. Adamek jumps up to heavyweight, beats Andrew Golota (KO 5), Jason Estrada (W 12), Chris Arreola (W 12), and Michael Grant (W 12) but gets *demoted*? Damn right. Here's why: He was the best cruiserweight in the world. He's not the best heavyweight in the world. Clearly he was better at 200 than he is at 215-plus. And you thought we didn't put any thought into this stuff.
Future: Another bloodletting in Newark, New Jersey, where he meets club fighter extraordinaire Vinny Maddalone in December.

49. YONNHY PEREZ IBF Bantamweight Titleholder 20-0-1 (14)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Perez' riveting punch-a-thon against Joseph Agbeko (W 12) was the kind of fight where the guys were punching when you left the room to get a beer and hit the bathroom and were still punching when you came back five minutes later. We're surprised they weren't throwing punches at their cornermen between rounds. And it was Perez who forced the pace. It was the same in his war with Abner Mares (D 12). He is going to be very hard to beat.
Future: A rematch with Agbeko in December in the first round of Showtime's bantamweight tournament.

50. DEVON ALEXANDER WBC Junior Welterweight Titleholder 21-0 (13)

Last Year's Ranking: 49
Status Report: Alexander is a very good little fighter, as evidenced by his wins over Juan Urango (KO 8) and Andreas Kotelnik (W 12). He has a wonderful story, too, that's been skillfully told, and it may be that his story has tricked many into thinking he is better than he is.
Future: Reportedly scheduled to face Tim Bradley on January 29.

51. ABNER MARES
Bantamweight 20-0-1 (13)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Mares' wonderful slugfest with Yonnhy Perez (D 12) was a coming out party of sorts, as it showed the full depth of Mares' skill and tenacity. He hung right with Perez for all 12 rounds and made believers of those who thought him another mere coddled prospect.
Future: Scheduled to face experienced puncher Vic Darchinhyan on December 11 in the first round of Showtime's bantamweight tournament. What a fight!

Mares' uppercut slams into Perez' chin

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

52. ANDREAS KOTELNIK
Junior Welterweight 31-4-1 (13)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: You're not alone if you thought Kotelnik did enough to beat Devon Alexander when they met in August (L 12), and that's a good part of the reason Kotelnik cracks the top 100 for the first time. He also beat highly regarded puncher Marcos Maidana in 2009 (W 12) and went the full distance in a losing effort against Amir Khan (L 12).
Future: Kotelnik's strong showing against Alexander will get him at least one more high-profile fight. For a while, it looked like it would come against prospect Victor Ortiz in what would have been an interesting test for Ortiz. Either way, you'll see Kotelnik again.

53. JOSEPH AGBEKO Bantamweight 27-2 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 52
Status Report: Agbeko's loss to Yonnhy Perez last October (L 12) was close enough to warrant just a small demotion for "King Kong," who was in the fight from the first bell to the last and very nearly kept up with Perez' dizzying punch rate. It is discouraging that he hasn't fought since then. Could he have made so much money that night that he didn't need to work again for a year?
Future: A rematch with Perez on December 11 in the first round of the bantamweight tournament on Showtime.

54. JOSHUA CLOTTEY
Welterweight 35-4 (20)

Last Year's Ranking: 24
Status Report: Clottey fans have to face the truth: Your man is one of those guys who will beat every fighter a level below his but lose to every fighter at the level above his. Look at his record: losses to Manny Pacquiao (L 12), Miguel Cotto (L 12), and Antonio Margarito (L 12). Wins over Zab Judah (Tech. Win 9), Jose Cruz (KO 5), Shamone Alvarez (W 12). Don't feel sorry for him. It's a living.
Future: Nothing signed as we went to press, but there's lots of work available for a capable guy like Clottey if he wants it.

55. TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA
WBC Junior Featherweight Titleholder
37-4-3 (23)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Nishioka breaks the top 100 on the strength of victories over Jhonny Gonzalez (KO 3), Choko Hernandez (KO 3), Balweg Bangoyan (KO 5), and Rendall Munroe (W 12). This guy's the real deal; two of his four losses were to Veeraphol Sahaprom, with whom he also drew twice, and he's riding a 14-fight winning streak.
Future: A title defense against Akifumi Shimoda before the end of 2011, but a bout with Ryol Li Lee would crown a RING champ.

Nishioka catches Munroe with a right

PHOTO BY SANKEI/GETTY IMAGES

56. DAVID HAYE WBA Heavyweight Titleholder 24-1 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 66

Status Report: By the time you read this, Haye will likely have beaten his latest excuse for not fighting a Klitschko, the once-promising Audley Harrison. That embarrassment aside, Haye had a decent run since last year's Ring 100, outpointing mountainous Nicolay Valuev (W 12) and then stopping and retiring human barnacle John Ruiz (KO 9). We owe him a debt of gratitude for the latter, so we'll speak no further here of his reluctance to face The Brothers Klitschko.

Future: There's no end to the number of pitiable heavyweights the WBA could trot out to keep Haye's sanctioning fees flowing, but maybe we'll get lucky and Haye will meet like-sized Tomasz Adamek in a very interesting matchup. Keep your fingers crossed.

Cayo fields a right from Maidana

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

57. MARCOS MAIDANA Junior Welterweight 29-1 (27)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked

Status Report: Maidana has gotten a lot of mileage out of his thrilling win over Victor Ortiz in 2009 (KO 6) and followed it with victories over William Gonzales (KO 3), Victor Cayo (KO 6), and DeMarcus Corley (W 12). He's not the most skilled guy out there, nor the fastest, but he's tough as hell and hits like a middleweight.

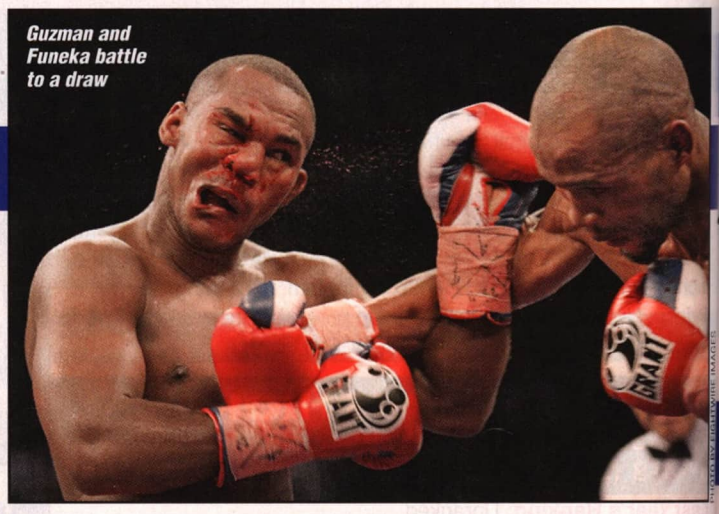
Future: A very interesting showdown with Amir Khan on December 11 with one of the several dozen WBA junior welterweight titles on the line.

58. KERMIT CINTRON Junior Middleweight 32-3-1 (28)

Last Year's Ranking: 82

Status Report: You can make a case for rating Cintron higher; he does have that win over Alfredo Angulo (W 12), and his draw against Sergio Martinez looks better all the time. He's held back by a fairly meaningless win over Juliano Ramos (KO 5) and his bizarre technical decision loss to Paul Williams (Tech. Loss 4) when he flew out of the ring and either couldn't or wouldn't continue.

Future: The junior middleweight class is stronger right now than it's been in years. We'd love to see Cintron against young Vanes Martirosyan or maybe even Miguel Cotto or Sergei Dzinrizuk.



Guzman and Funeka battle to a draw

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

59. JOAN GUZMAN Junior Welterweight 30-0-1 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 32

Status Report: Guzman will have faced no-hoper Christopher Fernandez in New York by the time you read this, an event that will do little to restore his reputation. Guzman's two fights with Ali Funeka (D 12, W 12) conspired to make him something of a villain.

Future: There are many very good fighters at 140, and, talent-wise, Guzman is right with the best of them. What he appears to lack is their self-discipline. If he can get that together, he's an even bet against any of them.

60. ALI FUNEKA Lightweight 30-3-3 (25)

Last Year's Ranking: 89

Status Report: Funeka is 0-2-1 in his last three fights, and he still gets bumped up. Why? He fought Nate Campbell to a standstill (L 12), is widely thought to have been robbed blind in his first match with Joan Guzman (D 12), and, in the return, struggled to make weight while Guzman came in nine pounds overweight (L 12). This guy can't get a break.

Future: Nothing scheduled as we went to press, which is a shame. Funeka can fight and deserves a shot at one of the bigger names.

61. OMAR **NARVAEZ** Junior Bantamweight 32-0-2 (19)

Last Year's Ranking: 57
Status Report: Are we being xenophobic if we say we'd like Narvaez to fight in the United States already? He should take it as a compliment. We like undefeated guys as much as anybody, and Narvaez stayed that way in 2010 with wins over Santiago Acosta (W 10) in a non-title bout and Evirth Briceno for some bogus title or another (W 12). Both in Argentina.
Future: How about a showdown with excellent Mexican Hugo Cazares?

62. DAISUKE **NAITO** Flyweight 36-3-3 (23)

Last Year's Ranking: 27
Status Report: We predicted in this analysis last year that Naito would suffer a drop and, for once, we were right. (No, we're not psychic; the guy's 36 years old.) His loss to Koki Kameda (L 12) was a huge blow to his standing, and a win over journeyman Liempetch Sor Veeraphol (KO 5) at junior bantam didn't help much.
Future: He'd love a rematch with Kameda, but he shouldn't count on it. Kameda has bigger fish to fry.

PHOTO BY BORIS STREUBEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Huck sends Minto sprawling to the floor

63. MARCO **HUCK** Cruiserweight 30-1 (23)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: American fans know Huck only as the guy who lost to Steve Cunningham a couple years ago, but, since then, he's won 11 in a row, including stoppage wins over Americans Adam Richards (KO 3), Brian Minto (KO 9), and Matt Godfrey (KO 5), all in 2010. This guy can fight.
Future: It sure would be nice to crown a RING champion at cruiserweight, which a rematch with Cunningham would get us. And now that Cunningham is based in Germany, maybe it'll happen.

PHOTO BY JIJI PRESS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Kameda misses Kaovichit with a left

64. DAIKI **KAMEDA** WBA Flyweight Titleholder 18-2 (11)

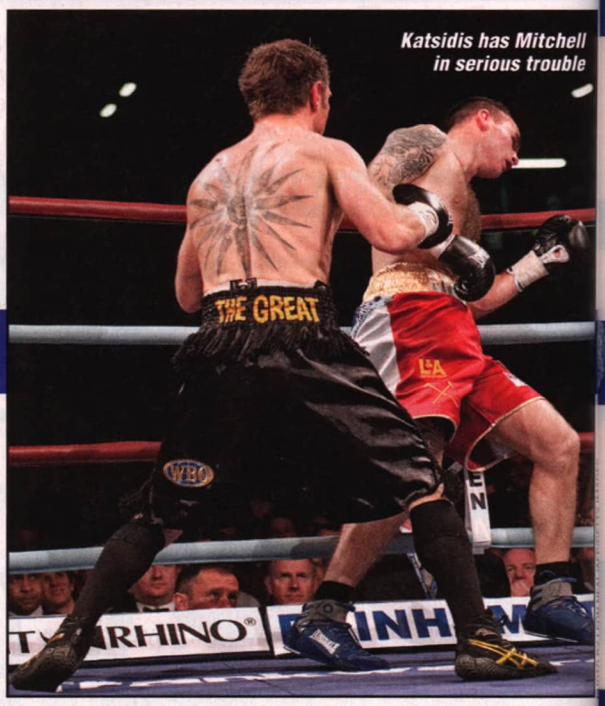
Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Daiki isn't as flashy as his brother Koki, but he had at least as good a year, beating Denkaosan Kaovichit in their rematch (W 12), Rosendo Vega (W 10), and then the big one over Takefumi Sakata (W 12). If he keeps this up, maybe he gets another promotion next year. Who knows, maybe he and Koki can be the new Klitschkos.
Future: Look for a fight against Luis Concepcion or Jean Piero Perez next.

65. STEVE **MOLITOR** IBF Junior Featherweight Titleholder 33-1 (12)

Last Year's Ranking: 62
Status Report: Molitor stayed busy over the last year, earning a slight bump by beating Jose Saez (W 8), Takalani Ndlovu (W 12)—no, that's not a typo—and Jason Booth (W 12). Good for him. What happens when he gets in with a top guy again? Does he freeze like he did against Caballero?
Future: Nothing signed at press time, but how about giving a shot to Philadelphia's undefeated Teon Kennedy?

66. SERGEI DZINDZIRUK Junior Middleweight 37-0 (23)

Last Year's Ranking: 77
Status Report: It's amazing what a little activity and American exposure can do for you. Last year, Dzindziruk was on the verge of dropping off this list altogether for lack of activity, and, not coincidentally, lack of interest. And who could blame us? He didn't fight at all in 2009. He finally showed up at a casino in California of all places, and we'll be damned if he didn't box the bejesus out of Daniel Dawson (KO 10). This guy can fight after all.
Future: American promoter Gary Shaw is trying hard to get Dzindziruk on television. Let's hope he succeeds. Dzindziruk is the real deal.



Katsidis has Mitchell in serious trouble

67. MICHAEL KATSIDIS Lightweight 27-2 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 74
Status Report: As you read this, someone is busy scrubbing and bleaching the canvas Katsidis bled all over during his loss to Juan Manuel Marquez on November 27. That's not to denigrate Katsidis, who is tremendously improved over the fighter who lost to Joel Casamayor and Juan Diaz in 2008. Could that guy have starched 31-0 Kevin Mitchell (KO 3) the way this new, improved Katsidis did in May? (Hint: probably.) The problem is he's facing Juan Manuel Marquez, and exciting rarely beats great.
Future: As long as his skin and spirit hold up, Katsidis will earn a living bleeding all over the place and knocking second-tier guys into next week. There are worse ways to pay the bills.

68. FELIX STURM WBA Middleweight Titleholder 34-2-1 (14)

Last Year's Ranking: 79
Status Report: Fans of Sturm will lament his relatively low placement here; they shouldn't, and not only because no one can hear them over the yawns. Despite all the hoopla around his new promotional ties, Sturm fought just once during the subject period, jabbing Giovanni Lorenzo's nose into the back of his head. Still, he gets a bump from last year, as much as anything an acknowledgment that we might have underrated him last year. He's a good fighter. He's just blander than mayonnaise.
Future: We've given up hope Sturm will face a young, exciting middleweight. Not only because very few exist right now, he's just not that into it.

Ortiz bangs a left off Harris' head

69. VICTOR ORTIZ Junior Welterweight 28-2-1 (22)

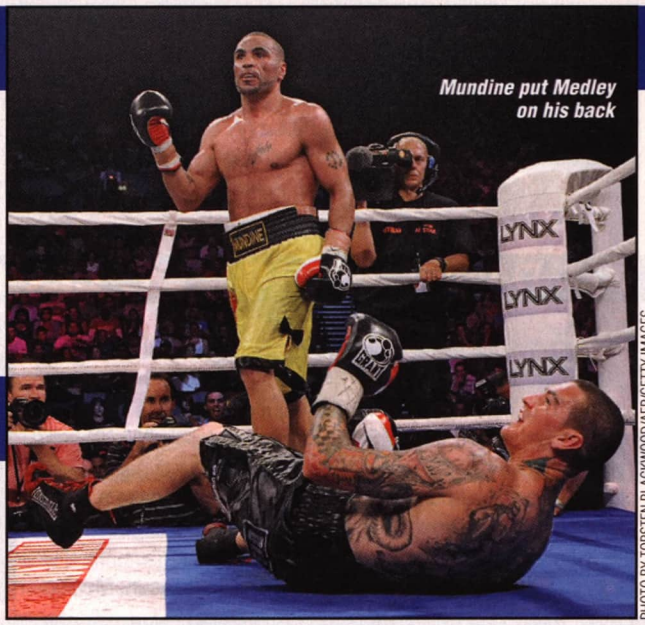
Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Give Ortiz this: He's worked fairly hard rehabilitating his image after the quit job against Marcos Maidana, beating Antonio Diaz (KO 7), Hector Alatorre (KO 10), Nate Campbell (W 10), and Vivian Harris (KO 3).
Future: A very interesting and risky match against the very good Lamont Peterson on December 11 in Las Vegas. They should call it "Put Up Or Shut Up."

70. NOBUO NASHIRO Junior Bantamweight 14-2-1 (9)

Last Year's Ranking: 51
Status Report: Nashiro takes a bit of a tumble, his reward for giving a rematch to Hugo Cazares (L 12). Not the best move he's ever made. Cazares won by a wide margin, pretty much invalidating the good will Nashiro gained with his draw against Cazares in 2009. Nashiro's only other appearance of the year was a win over 6-6 (4) neophyte Iwan Key (KO 3).
Future: Another year like this and Nashiro will find himself a 14-time WBA champion. Go Nobuo!

71. ANTHONY **MUNDINE**
Junior Middleweight 40-3 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 63
Status Report: Fans of Mundine will continue to be outraged at his placement near the lower third of this analysis since the guy fought three times in 2010 and does nothing but win, but seriously—Robert Medley (W 12), Carlos Jerez (W 12), and Ryan Waters (KO 10). Really? For a minute last year, there was some talk of Mundine meeting Kelly Pavlik or even Felix Sturm. Forget it. It'll never happen.
Future: Scheduled to meet 9-1-1 (5) Garth Wood on December 8. See what we mean?



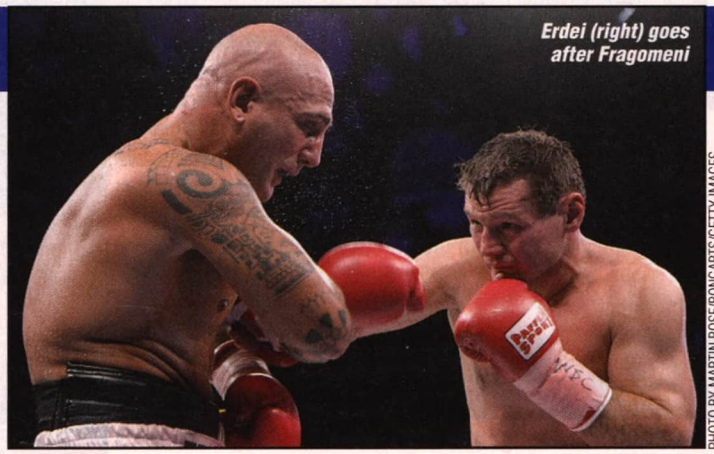
Mundine put Medley on his back
PHOTO BY TORSTEN BLACKWOOD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

72. RYOL LI **LEE**
Junior Featherweight 17-1-1 (8)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Talk about a jump in class. The three guys Lee beat before taking down the very formidable Poonsawat Kraetingdaenggym (W 12) had a combined record of 34-13-6 (17). But apparently Big M Or Boonchuay (KO 3), Kazunori Takayama (W 10) and Hisashi Amagasa (W 10) prepared Lee for one of the year's bigger upsets. Good for them. Especially Big M Or Boonchuay, just because it's so much fun to say.
Future: Nothing signed as we went to press, but a rematch with Kratingaenggym makes the most sense. If he wins, he proves the first fight wasn't a fluke. If he loses, he sets up a big rubber match, so long as he's competitive. It's a no-brainer.

73. ZSOLT **ERDEI**
Cruiserweight 31-0 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 55
Status Report: Erdei will have met one Samson Onyango by the time you read this, ending just under a year of inactivity. Another month sitting on his behind would have resulted in his omission from this analysis altogether. As it is, he suffers a severe but entirely deserved 16-place tumble. In his last fight of importance, Erdei beat Giacobbe Fragomeni (W 12) to claim an alphabet strap.
Future: We're hopeful that Erdei's recent alliance with American promoter Lou DiBella means Erdei will go to work frequently and primarily in the US so we can figure out once and for all if he's as good as his record suggests.


Erdei (right) goes after Fragomeni
PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

74. POONSAWAT **KRATINGAENGGYM** Junior Featherweight 41-2 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: 36
Status Report: This is a hell of a long way to topple for the once-mighty Kratingaenggym, but he did lose to upstart Ryol Li Lee, and not by a little. And it wasn't as though anyone had heard much of Lee before; he didn't make this analysis last year and had beaten no one of consequence before relieving Kratingaenggym of the alphabet strap. We agree it's a bit harsh, but, if we're not hard on these guys, how will they ever learn?
Future: The best thing he could do is get Lee back in the ring, and we mean now.

75. OMAR **NINO** WBC Junior Flyweight Titleholder 30-3-2 (12) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 91
Status Report: It's hard not to root for Nino, who gets a boost off a pair of fights with tough Rodel Mayol (Tech. Draw 3, W 12), and a stoppage of the useful Ronald Barrera (KO 6). He will have met and beaten the veteran Gilberto Keb Baas in Mexico (where else?) by the time you read this.
Future: Will probably meet Adrian Hernandez or Noknoi Sitthiprasert after disposing of Keb Baas.

76. ULISES **SOLIS** Junior Flyweight 32-2-2 (21)

Last Year's Ranking: 56

Status Report: You probably thought Solis was going to disappear after his kayo loss to Brian Viloria in April 2009. Nope. He's won four straight since, beating Direcu Cabarca (W 8), Bert Batawang (KO 6), Eric Ortiz (W 10), and Luis Carlos Leon (W 10). Are those guys world-beaters? Nope again. But the wins keep Solis active and honest and in the conversation. Good for him.

Future: Nothing scheduled as of press time, but maybe the best fight in the class would be a shootout between Solis and Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. Bombs away!

77. DANIEL **PONCE DE LEON** Featherweight 40-2 (33)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked

Status Report: Few of us can forget how easily Juan Manuel Lopez annihilated Ponce De Leon in 2008, but the Mexican slugger has come back admirably since last year's Ring 100, beating Orlando Cruz (KO 3), Cornelius Lock (W 10), and Antonio Escalante (KO 3). He may be caught between styles a bit, but he's still all-puncher and is a threat to pancake a guy at any moment. His punch keeps him in any fight and gets him on this list.

Future: Scheduled to fight on December 4 in Cancun, Mexico.

Ponce De Leon hooks Escalante

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

78. NEHOMAR **CERMENO** Bantamweight 19-2 (11)

Last Year's Ranking: 73

Status Report: It's not often that a guy who's gone 1-2 in his last three fights slides just six spots from last year, but here it's warranted. Cermeno beat Alejandro Valdez (KO 11) and then lost two squeakers (L 12, L 12) to the very good Anselmo Moreno, who appears on this list at number 39. A judge glances at a round card girl or turns his head to pick his ear, maybe those fights are wins for Cermeno. Oh, like that stuff never happens. Now who's being naïve?

Future: Cermeno's not in the bantamweight tournament, so that's out. But why not fight a guy like, say, Eric Morel or Christian Mijares?

Malignaggi temporarily keeps Khan at bay

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

79. PAULIE **MALIGNAGGI** Junior Welterweight 27-4 (5)

Last Year's Ranking: 47

Status Report: If you thought we were going to abandon Malignaggi just because he got his head handed to him by Amir Khan (KO by 11), forget it. It was a terrible style matchup for Malignaggi, who needs a little guy to come forward. Which brings us to Malignaggi's virtuoso win over Juan Diaz (W 12) in their rematch, and the first one (L 12) was pretty damn good too. Those are why he's here.

Future: Scheduled to face TBA, hopefully a little guy who comes forward, on December 18 in Quebec.

80. MIGUEL **ACOSTA** Lightweight 27-8-2 (21)

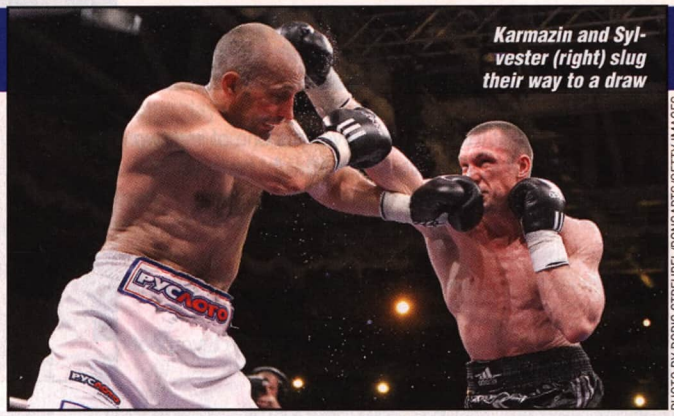
Last Year's Ranking: Unranked

Status Report: One sure way to get on this list is to beat two pretty good undefeated guys back-to-back, and that's what Acosta did in stopping Urbano Antillon (KO 9) and Paulus Moses (KO 6). As far as we can tell, Acosta is a full level below Michael Katsidis and two levels below Juan Manuel Marquez, but we think he can hold his own and then some with any other lightweight in the world, including upstarts Brandon Rios, John Murray, and Anthony Peterson—especially Anthony Peterson.

Future: Acosta will face either Brandon Rios or Robert Guerrero before 2011 is over.

81. SEBASTIAN **SYLVESTER**
IBF Middleweight Titleholder 33-3-1 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: 85
Status Report: Sylvester gets a small bump based on wins over Billy Lyell (KO 10) and an odd draw with Roman Karmazin (D 12). If he has lost to Mahir Oral by the time you read this, he will be banned from this analysis altogether next year and maybe forever. We're doubtful that will happen, though. We get the sense they'd have to scrape his carcass out of the first row in order for him to lose a decision in Germany.
Future: We're going to go out on a limb and bet that in 2011 Sylvester will defend his belt two times against average or below-average European flotsam. Any takers? Didn't think so.

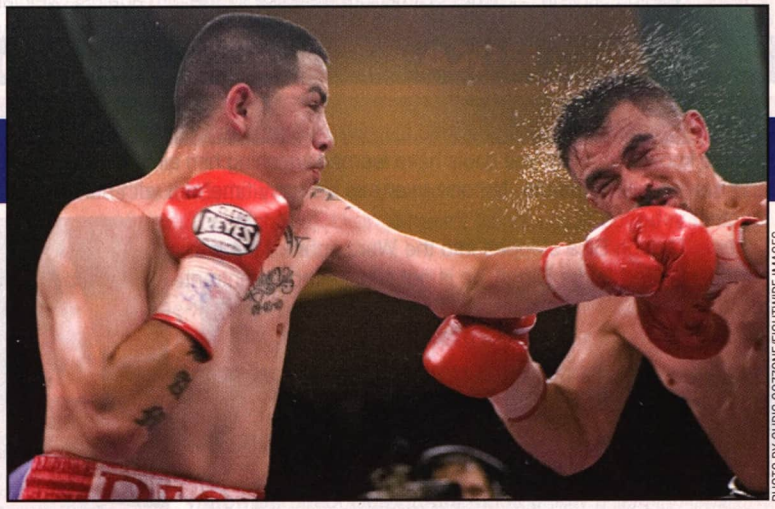

Karmazin and Sylvester (right) slug their way to a draw
PHOTO BY BORIS STREUBEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

82. RYAN **RHODES** Junior Middleweight 44-4 (30)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Since his inexplicable loss to Gary Lockett way back in 2006, Rhodes has been on a bit of a tear, winning nine in a row, seven by knockout. That's the good news. The bad is that unless you follow boxing very closely in the United Kingdom, you have no clue as to how good any of those nine guys are. At the least, wins over the fairly well-credentialed Luca Messi (KO 6)—a terrible name for a fighter we're sure you'll agree—and Jamie Moore (KO 7) get him into the top 100.
Future: Rhodes is competitive with the guys THE RING rates beneath him at 154, and gets absolutely destroyed by any of the monsters rated above him. Here's a bit of advice, Ryan: Go under.

83. BRANDON **RIOS**
Lightweight 25-0-1 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Rios' thrilling win over Anthony Peterson (W DQ 7) in November on HBO was clearly a breakout fight for him, even if Peterson's incessant nut-punching deprived viewers of the conclusive ending for which they were looking. Between that fight and a win over reasonably tough Jorge Luis Teron (KO3), Rios had a very good year indeed. It's going to be fun watching this kid develop.
Future: Scheduled to face Noe Bolanos on December 4 in Anaheim, California.


Rios sends Madrid's sweat flying with a left
PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

84. MZONKE **FANA** IBF Junior Lightweight Titleholder 30-4 (12)

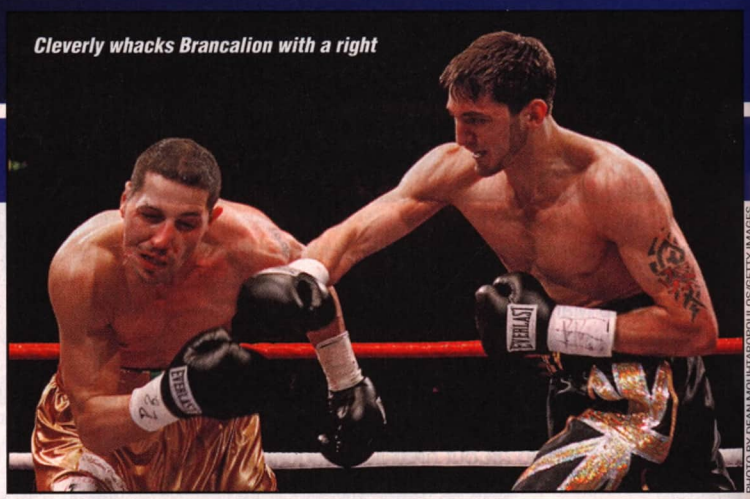
Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Fana may be the best of a wretchedly poor division, but he's doing something right. You can't discount entirely a year in which he bested once-beaten Jasper Seroka (KO 6) and then avenged a majority decision loss to nemesis Cassius Baloyi (W 12). And the margin of victory over Baloyi was a combined 27 points. He dominated the way a guy at the top of his division should.
Future: A fight against Scotland's Ricky Burns would be wonderful. More likely is an alphabet defense against Leva Kirakosian. He will have no part of Jorge Linares, whom the IBF and THE RING still rate at 130 pounds.

85. ALEXANDER **POVETKIN** Heavyweight 20-0 (15)

Last Year's Ranking: 64
Status Report: Povetkin slides 21 rungs almost entirely because his trainer, Teddy Atlas, said he's not good enough to face Wladimir Klitschko yet, and who are we to argue? Also, we have to say that for all the talk about Atlas taking him to the next level, Povetkin's recent resume—wins over Leo Nolan (KO 3), Javier Mora (KO 5), and Teke Oruh (KO 5)—is a bit underwhelming.
Future: If Atlas thinks fighting stiffs is the way to get ready for a Klitschko, we've got bad news for him: It's been tried.

86. NATHAN CLEVERLY
Light Heavyweight 20-0 (10)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: At this writing, Cleverly is one of just two undefeated guys in The Ring's top-10 light heavyweight (Tavoris Cloud is the other), and he hasn't been bowling over just stiffs. The combined record of his last seven opponents is 125-14-2 (62), and he stopped the heretofore undefeated Karo Murat (KO 10), The Ring's eighth-ranked 175-pounder.
Future: Scheduled to face Alejandro Lakatos in Liverpool on December 11.


Cleverly whacks Brancalion with a right
PHOTO BY DEAN MOUNTANOPOULOS/GETTY IMAGES

87. LIBRADO ANDRADE Super Middleweight 29-3 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 81
Status Status Report: You could make the argument that this is an unfairly low rating for a guy who's hell to fight for anyone who can't jump around like a meth addict for 12 rounds, but let's remember a couple things. First, he was *way* behind on points when he almost stopped Lucian Bute in their match in 2008 (L 12), and then Bute obliterated him in their rematch (KO by 4). Even the ancient and decrepit Eric Lucas had some success against him before Andrade walked him down (KO 8). We love to watch the guy fight too, but we shouldn't mistake "exciting" for ability that merits a higher ranking than this. And for a face-first guy, this is a hell of a good rating.
Future: Nothing scheduled at press time, but we'd like to see him against, well, anyone at or around 168 pounds.

88. SAKIO BIKA Super Middleweight 28-4-2 (19)

Last Year's Ranking: 84
Status Report: By the time you read this, Bika will probably have lost to Andre Ward, but you never can tell with this guy. Everything you want to know about him you could have learned watching him almost decapitate poor Jean Paul Mendy (L DQ 1). He's big, crazy-strong, and maybe a little insane. No one ever has an easy time of it with him—ask Joe Calzaghe—but he's not skilled enough to put it all together yet.
Future: Though Bika stepped into the Ward fight for the purportedly injured Andre Dirrell, he is not considered an entrant in the "Super Six" tournament, which will make things very awkward if he's knocked Ward stiff by the time your read this.

Pirog ends Jacobs' undefeated streak
PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

89. DMITRY PIROG
Middleweight 17-0 (14)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: It would seem that Pirog's lone noteworthy accomplishment for the year was his beautiful annihilation of Danny Jacobs (KO 5), but he also has wins over American Eric Mitchell (KO 5) and Kofi Jantuah (W 12). Don't think this guy can't fight because he's whiter than Ricky Hatton and looks like he hasn't hit puberty yet. He's the goods. Ask Jacobs.
Future: Pirog will be on HBO in 2011, with any luck against Kelly Pavlik.

90. JUAN DIAZ Lightweight 35-4 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 46
Status Report: Clearly, Diaz is trending downward. Just two years ago, he landed at 22 in this analysis. Two years later, he's lost twice to Juan Manuel Marquez (KO by 9, L 12) and split a pair of fights with Paulie Malignaggi (W 12, L 12). That's the bad news. The good is that the first fight with Marquez was 2009's Fight of the Year, and Diaz didn't disgrace himself in the rematch. And it wasn't Lady Gaga he lost to, it was Juan Manuel Marquez. So for now, Diaz stays.
Future: Guys who fight like Diaz burn out young. He's only 27 years old, but it's a hard 27. And he's got that whole law school thing going on. Don't be surprised if you never see him in a ring again.

91. WLADIMIR **SIDORENKO** Bantamweight 22-2-2 (7)

Last Year's Ranking: 88
Status Report: At 34 years old, it's highly probable that Sidorenko is past his better days. His wins over Joseph Agbeko and Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym seem ages ago. Clearly he's not interested in being very busy anymore: just three fights over the last couple years, a pair of close losses to highly ranked Anselmo Moreno (L 12, L 12), and a win over Mbwana Matumla (W 12). We imagine he is in the homestretch of what has been a mostly successful career.
Future: Scheduled to meet Nonito Donaire on December 4 in Anaheim, California. That might be a good one to go out on.

92. ORLANDO **SALIDO**
Featherweight 34-11-2 (22) with 1 no-decision

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: If this list were concerned solely with straight-up hunger and balls, Salido might be in the top 10. The guy is work boot-tough, and, if you don't believe us, ask Cristobal Cruz, who Salido beat last May (W 12), avenging a split-decision loss that occurred in 2008. His spirited, if hopeless, showing against Yuriorkis Gamboa (L 12) evidenced typical Salido: relentless, indefatigable, but just not as talented as he is tough. It's damn shame.
Future: Guys with double-digit losses are frowned on by the TV networks, but Salido will get work for as long as he wants it. At 29 years old, he's got a couple years left yet to make a few guys wish they'd gone into another line of work.

PHOTO BY RAY KASPRZEICZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Salido digs to Gamboa's body

93. JUAN **URANGO** Junior Welterweight 22-3-1 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 87
Status Report: Devon Alexander owes Urango a big debt. It was Alexander's knockout of Urango (KO by 8) that made people think Alexander suddenly became a big puncher (he isn't) and a special fighter (he might be). Urango hasn't fought since, but he got enough good work done at junior welter before the Alexander fight that he stays on the list for now.
Future: Nothing scheduled at press time, but Urango should get while the getting is still good. There are lots of good 140-pounders right now, and he can get in on some of the bigger fights if he wants to. Who wouldn't want to see Urango against Marcos Maidana, for example?

94. LAMONT **PETERSON**
Junior Welterweight 28-1 (14)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Only a special fighter like Tim Bradley could make Peterson seem as wholly impotent as Bradley did in their meeting last December. Sure, Bradley won by a combined 32 points. That says more about Bradley than it does about Peterson, who beat Damian Fuller (KO 7) next time out. Peterson can fight, and we predict he'll land quite a bit higher on this list next year, so long as he stays away from a rematch with Bradley.
Future: A very interesting match against Victor Ortiz on December 11 in Las Vegas.

PHOTO BY NATASHA CHORNESKY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Peterson jabs at Fuller

95. TAKEFUMI **SAKATA** Flyweight 36-6-2 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 70
Status Report: Sakata plummets 25 spots following a dismal year in which he beat an absolute no-hoper in Eric Siregar (KO 1) and then lost to Daiki Kameda (L 12). This after falling from 44 to 70 in last year's analysis. Don't get us wrong; it's still a hell of a thing to be rated one of the best 100 fighters in the world. But dropping 51 rungs in two years is remarkable. And unless we expand this analysis next year to include the top *150* fighters in the world, we suspect this is Sakata's final appearance.
Future: Nothing scheduled as we went to press, which, all things considered, could be a good thing. Sakata might need some time off.

96. NKOSINATHI JOYI Strawweight 21-0 (15)

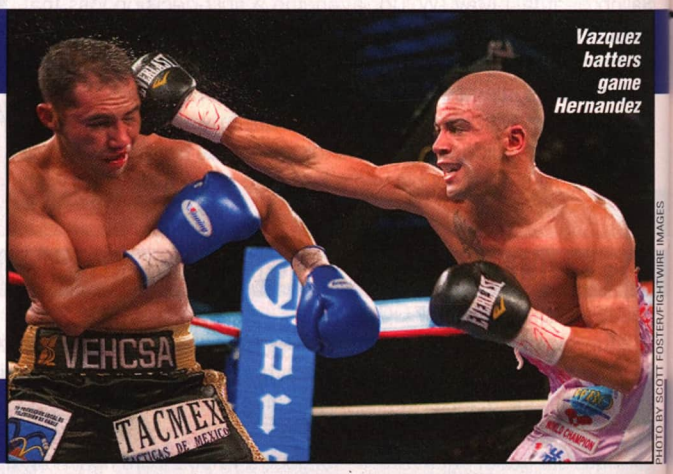
Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Joyi will have faced Katsunari Takayama in South Africa by the time you read this and most likely will have beaten him. Joyi is on a roll, having beaten Florante Condes (W 12) and, more importantly, Raul Garcia (W 12) over the last 18 months. He's not a bad puncher for a little guy and isn't afraid to get in there and work. He could be around a while.
Future: Takayama is Joyi's alphabet mandatory. Don't be surprised if he meets Garcia again after that.

97. CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE
IBF Junior Middleweight Titleholder 30-4 (18) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Laugh all you want, but this fact remains: We put Cory Spinks at 48 last year. And in August, "K9" blew him out of the ring (KO 5). We don't like it any better than you do, but maybe we all should just accept that with his innate strength, drive, awkwardness, and Emanuel Steward in his corner, maybe Bundrage can fight a bit. We'll bet Spinks thinks so.
Future: Nothing scheduled at press time, but there's no reason Bundrage can't get in on some of the good business getting done among the top-10 guys at 154. We don't think he beats any of those guys, but, hey, we underestimate this guy at our peril.

98. RICKY BURNS
Junior Lightweight 29-2 (7)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: How does Burns crack the top 100? Almost entirely on the weight of his win over then-undefeated Roman Martinez in September (W 12). Wins over Kevin O'Hara (W 12) and Michael Gomez (KO 7) don't hurt either. Burns has faced a lot of sub-.500 guys and that makes us suspicious. But the Martinez fight carries weight.
Future: Scheduled to meet Andreas Evensen in Glasgow on December 4.



Vazquez batters game Hernandez
PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

99. WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.
Junior Featherweight 20-0-1 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: It's easy to underrate the sons of famous fighting fathers, but Vazquez looks like the real thing—a rarity in this genre. Wins over Genaro Garcia (KO 7), Marvin Sonsona (KO 4), Zsolt Bedak (KO 10), and Choko Hernandez (KO 11) don't lie. The kid can punch like a welterweight and, as his record makes clear, carries his power late into a fight. Keep your eye on this kid, even if he is a junior.
Future: A blockbuster of a showdown, relatively speaking, with Mexican favorite Jorge Arce.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Alvarez pierces Baldomir's guard with a left

100. SAUL ALVAREZ
Junior Middleweight 34-0-1 (26)

Last Year's Ranking: Unranked
Status Report: Alvarez isn't a perfect fighter by any means, but for a 20-year-old kid, he's got it all together. Three wins in 2010 get him here—over Jose Miguel Cotto (KO 9), Luciano Cuello (KO 6), and a stirring, face-first kayo of shopworn but useful former welterweight world champion Carlos Baldomir (KO 6). What a future this kid's got.
Future: Scheduled to face veteran Lovemore N'dou in Cancun, Mexico, on December 4.

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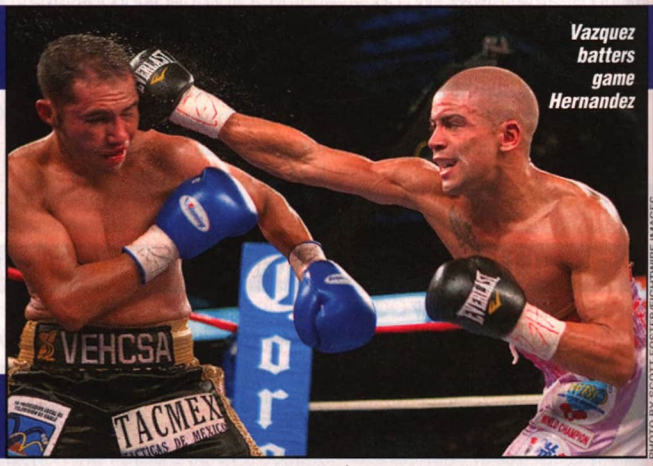

Vazquez batters game Hernandez

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

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PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

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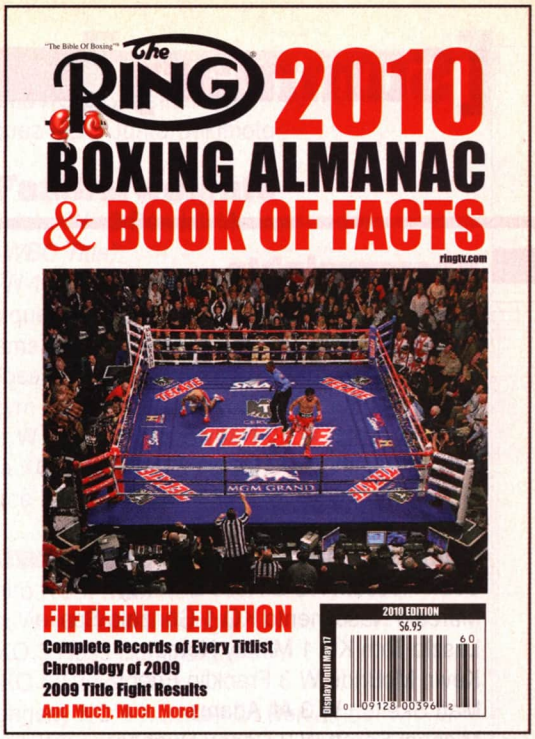

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Summary

Heavyweights

Vitali Klitschko W 12 Shannon Briggs
(Retains WBC Title)
Alexander Povetkin KO 5 Teke Oruh
Hasim Rahman KO 1 Marcus McGee
Antonio Tarver W 10 Nagy Aguilera
Timur Ibragimov W 10 Luis Andres Pineda
Timo Hoffmann D 12 Alexander Petkovic
Sebastian Ceballos W 10 Emilio Zarate
George Foreman KO 3 David Robinson
Scott Rossum KO 2 Ross Brantley
Marcelo Nascimento KO 1 Gonzalo Basile
Laszlo Toth KO 1 Mihaly Nemet
Kevin McBride W 3 Franklin Egobi
Matt Skelton W 3 Ali Adams
Michael Sprott W 3 Danny Hughes
Alexander Ustinov KO 2 Oezcan Cetinkaya
Deontay Wilder KO 4 Harold Sconiers
Shane McPhilbin KO 2 Declan Timlin
Matt Skelton W 3 Kevin McBride
Michael Sprott W 3 Shane McPhilbin
Michael Sprott W 3 Matt Skelton
Walter Masseroni KO 3 Daniel Druker
Seth Mitchell KO 1 Derrick Brown
Tor Hamer KO 1 Terrell Nelson

Cruiserweights

Guillermo Jones KO 11 Valery Brudov
(Retains WBA Title)
Ola Afolabi W 10 Sandro Siproshvili
Rogelio Rossi W 12 Mariano Strunz
Leon Williams W 10 JJ Ojuederie
Daniel Ammann W 10 Oscar Siale
Lateef Kayode KO 6 Epifanio Mendoza
Agron Dzila Tech. Win 5 Mustapha Noor
Gabriel Heck KO 3 Gerardo Acevedo
Ryan Coyne KO 2 Shane Steele

Light Heavyweights

Adrian Diaconu W 10 Omar Sheika
Dawid Kostecki KO 4 Sean Corbin
Joe Spina KO 3 Antwun Echols
Nadjib Mohammedi KO 3 Djamel Selini
Jameson Bostic KO 1 Yuzo Kiyota

Super Middleweights

Lucian Bute KO 9 Jesse Brinkley
(Retains IBF Title)
Thomas Ulrich KO 3 Gyula Gaspar
Andy Lee KO 4 Troy Lowry
Serge Yannick W 12 Joseph Kwadjo
Paul Morby W 10 Matthew Barney
Caleb Truax KO 9 Jonathan Reid
Patrick Majewski KO 7 Joseph Gomez
Jesus Nerio KO 4 Gilberto Hernandez

Middleweights

Matt Hainy W 10 Tony Randell
Nilson Tapia W 10 Jorge Heiland
Raul Casarez W 10 Anthony Greenidge
Samuel Miller KO 7 Isaac Rodrigues
Claudio Abalos KO 7 Diego Gallardo
Michel Rosales KO 4 Octavio Castro
Ernest Amuzu KO 3 Edward Brew

Junior Middleweights

Frank LoPorto W 12 Daniel Dawson
Rigoberto Alvarez W 12 Nobuhiro Ishida
Sam Webb KO 11 Martin Concepcion
Anton Novikov W 10 Ishmael Tetteh
Damian Jonak W 10 Jose Cruz
Ronald Hearns KO 6 Robert Kliewer

Welterweights

Teerachai Kratingdaenggym W 12 Vladislav Savchenko
Sebastian Lujan W 10 Juan Dias
Kevin McCauley W 10 Dave Ryan
Gabriel Martinez W 10 Augusto Gamez

Welterweight Yoshihiro Kamegai walks away after downing Jose Alfaro

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Noni Tenge W 10 Francisca Mbang
Yoshihiro Kamegai KO 6 Jose Alfaro
Shawn Porter KO 9 Hector Munoz
Alejandro Barrera KO 6 Candelario Herrera
Brad Solomon KO 5 Pablo Vasquez
Cristian Pena KO 4 Juan Pitalua
Ionut Ion KO 4 Andres Villafane

Junior Welterweights

Paul McCloskey KO 7 Barry Morrison
Tyrone Nurse W 10 Ibrar Riyaz
Alberto Santillan W 10 Roberto Arrieta
Abdoulaye Soukouna W 10 Christopher Sebire
Roy Tua Manihuruk KO 9 Maxi Nahak
Stevie Ferdinandus KO 7 Jordan Hoy
Jay Morris KO 4 Gavin Deacon
Tim Coleman KO 3 Patrick Lopez

Lightweights

Jorge Linares KO 4 Jesus Chavez
Juan Pablo Sanchez W 12 Gabino Arias
Thompson Mokwana W 10 Samkelo Fani
Saul Carreon W 10 Luis Soto
Andy Murray W 10 John Nolasco
Ameth Diaz W 10 Javier Castro
Jonathan Maicelo W 10 Oscar Cuero
Jorge Barrios W 10 Wilson Alcorro
Krzysztof Cieslak W 10 Dariusz Snarski
Jean Pierre Bauwens D 10 Rudy Encarnacion
Patrick Malinga KO 8 Vusumzi Tyatyeka
Jose A. Gonzalez KO 7 Andres Navarro
Mia St. John W 6 Tammy Franks

Junior Lightweights

Yohannes Yordan W 12 Michael Sigarlaki
Liam Walsh W 12 Maxwell Awuku
Marcos Lopez W 10 Abraham Gomez
Abraham Rodriguez KO 10 Aristeo Perez
Mahsud Jumayev W 10 Sherzodbek Mamajanov
Tomas Sierra W 10 Juan Carlos Olvera
Eloy Perez W 10 Dominic Salcido
Carlos Cardenas W 10 Heli Quiroz
Jorge Perez KO 9 Didier Basulto
Takashi Miura KO 9 Takashi Inagaki

Featherweights

Christopher Perez W 12 Gilberto Bolanos
Eduardo Escobedo W 10 Cesar Soto
Nery Saguilan W 10 Eduardo Lazcano
Andres Gutierrez W 10 Andres Romero
Uriel Barrera W 10 Berman Sanchez
Irving Berry W 10 Feider Viloria
Jesus Cuellar KO 8 Diego Sananco
Carlos Zambrano KO 8 Lante Addy
Michael Franco W 8 Adolfo Landeros
Daud Cino Yordan KO 6 Christian Abila
Victor Terrazas KO 6 Christian Abila
Juan Rodriguez KO 3 Junta Sekimoto

Junior Featherweights

Toshiaki Nishioka W 12 Rendall Munroe
(Retains WBC Title)
Ryol Li Lee W 12 Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym
Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. KO 11 Ivan Hernandez
Shinsuke Yamanaka KO 9 Jose Silveira
Gerry Penalosa KO 4 Yodsaenkeng Kietmangmee
Sod Kokietgym W 12 Ray Las Pinas
Jamie Arthur W 12 Kris Hughes
Onalvi Sierra KO 10 Wegner Ortega
Francisco Arce KO 4 Isidro Garcia

Bantamweights

Nobuo Nashiro KO 3 Iwan Key
Angel Rivera W 10 Gabriel Rangel
Craig Lyon KO 5 Ross Burkinshaw
Xavier Urpi KO 5 Carlos Ruiz
Hendry Barongsay KO 4 Koratlek Or Benjamas
Gabriel Laryea KO 1 Kofi Atanga
Khabir Suleymanov KO 9 Javier Gallo
Richard Pumicpic KO 9 Rey Sumapig

Junior Bantamweights

Hugo Cazares KO 9 Alberto Rossel
John Mark Apolinario W 12 Vincent Palicte
Luis Melendez W 10 Alfonso De La Hoz
Marco Demecillo W 10 Dondon Jimenea
Juan Jose Montes Tech. Win 5 Sylvester Lopez
Juan Francisco Estrada KO 2 Manuel Armendariz
Ryuji Ikehara KO 3 Willem Marahina
Marvin Mabait KO 1 Rodel Veronque

Flyweights

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam W 12 Suriyan Por Chokchai
(Retains World/WBC Titles)
Julio Cesar Miranda KO 2 Michael Arango
Luis Concepcion KO 1 Denkaosan Kaovichit
Xola Sifama KO 11 Wele Yokose
Hongfah Buamas W 10 Noriko Shirai-Gushiken Gym
Jeffrey Cerna W 10 Rex Olisa
Sammy Hagler W 10 Yudi Arema

Junior Flyweights

Roman Gonzalez KO 2 Francisco Rosas
Felipe Rivas W 12 Lorenzo Trejo
Nelson Llanos W 10 Ronelle Ferreras
Marlon Tapales W 10 Richard Olisa
Paipharob Kokietgym KO 1 Jiang Tao
Israel Vazquez D 4 Janiel Rivera
Nethra Sasiprapa KO 4 Ricky Manufoe

Strawweights

Sammy Gutierrez KO 3 Luis Carrillo

Vitali Klitschko W 12 Shannon Briggs

Hamburg, Germany: With nothing else to shield himself from a shuddering assault by WBC heavyweight titleholder Klitschko, 251¼, Kiev, Ukraine, 38-year-old challenger Briggs, 262¼, Brooklyn, New York, relied on resilience and a cussedness that landed him in the intensive care unit of a local hospital after having survived 12 increasingly torturous rounds at the O2 World Arena. It was Klitschko's fifth defense of a WBC belt he won against Samuel Peter in October 2008 after almost four years of inactivity.

Briggs' injuries included a broken nose, a broken left orbital bone, and a torn left biceps. By the end—which many observers insisted ought to have come many rounds prior to the last bell, with fingers pointed accusingly at both his corner and British referee Ian John-Lewis for not extricating Briggs from a perilous predicament—it seemed that only his pride remained intact, such was the toll he paid just to stay on his feet. Reports in German newspaper *Bild* suggested that Briggs collapsed while trying to give a urine sample for the postfight doping test before being rushed to the hospital by ambulance.

"I came to the hospital Saturday night strictly as a precautionary measure, and, after several tests, the doctors concluded there were no severe head injuries," Briggs said in a statement. "However, I am still undergoing tests to determine what kind of surgery I will need on my left biceps because of an injury I suffered in the first round of the fight. Unfortunately, the injury kept me from fully executing my fight plan. Not to take anything away from the brilliant performance by Vitali, but, had I not injured my arm so early on, who knows how the fight would have concluded?"

It is safe to assume that the fight's course would not have altered much. In his postfight interview, Briggs candidly acknowledged that Klitschko "hits harder than [George] Foreman [whom Briggs beat on points in 1997], and he's got incredibly fast hands."

The 39-year-old former world champion's power was evident from an opening round in which he withstood a couple of strong straight rights by the challenger before wobbling him with a fierce right of his own. Klitschko landed another hard shot with his right in round two and dominated exchanges with his authoritative jab, hurting Briggs again in the third.

The 6'4" American was shaken further in the fifth by a heavy right and a follow-up combination that looked ominous. How could Briggs sustain such a relentless level of punishment, the severity of which escalated as the rounds progressed? Klitschko utilized his left hook, brutally, in tandem with his right in the sixth and knocked Briggs against the ropes in the seventh. The challenger's sorry state became even more pitiful with a cut and swelling developing under his left eye and the one-sided nature of the bout drew serious, legitimate questions about the actions—or lack thereof—of his corner and the referee.

"Throughout the contest my trainer, Herman Caicedo, wanted to stop the fight, but I made it clear that stopping was not an option," insisted Briggs, 51-6-1 (45). "Hopefully I showed you the heart of a lion and the perseverance of a champion."

Alas, the lingering impression was a lot less edifying, though no one could doubt Briggs's bravery or resolve to finish the fight. Klitschko's dominance was reflected on the scorecards with Guido Cavalleri (Italy) and Victor Manuel Cervantes (Mexico) both scoring 120-107, while the third judge, Anek Hongtongkam (Thailand), was even less magnanimous to the challenger with his 120-105 declaration. THE RING saw

PHOTO BY PATRICK LUX/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Klitschko gave brave Briggs a terrible beating

it 120-106 for Klitschko, 41-2 (38), who turned his attention again to Britain's David Haye afterward.

"I would like to knock out [WBA beltholder] Haye so that we can claim the only belt missing from the family's collection," said Klitschko, whose brother, Wladimir, holds THE RING championship and IBF and WBO belts. "There is no one in the world, apart from my brother, who can beat me. I am the strongest, I still have plenty of energy, and, in a few months, I will be ready to get back in the ring."

Television: **ESPN3**
Promoter: **K2 Promotions**
(10-16-10)
Brian Doogan

Hugo Cazares KO 9 Alberto Rossel

Tlalnepantla, Mexico: Rossel put up a valiant effort, but he was no match for the size and skill of Cazares, who won impressively at the Centro de Convenciones in Tlalnepantla.

For Cazares, whom THE RING rates second at 115 pounds, it was the second defense of the WBA so-called "regular" junior bantamweight belt he won in May from Nobuo Nashiro in Japan. The WBA also recognizes Vic Darchinyan as its "super" champion and Nonito Donaire as its "interim" titlist, though both are headed to 118 pounds, which could leave the organization temporarily scrambling for sanctioning fees.

The unranked Rossel, 24-8 (11), had won six straight before facing Cazares, 114¾, Los Mochis, Mexico. Almost all of his losses were to noteworthy opponents, including Ivan Calderon, Brian Viloria, Daniel Reyes, Vusi Malinga, and Luis Lazarte, while all of his wins have come against non-descript competition.

The taller Cazares, 33-6-2 (24), made sure that trend didn't change. He stalked patiently and had Rossel, 114½, Lima, Peru, backing up from the opening round. Cazares landed hard, single shots from a distance and punished Rossel whenever the Peruvian tried to work his way inside. Rossel, 32, tried to pick up the pace in the fourth, but the 32-year-old Cazares capitalized by landing a right hand to the face that dropped "Chiquito," who emerged with a bloody nose.

Cazares remained patient despite the knockdown, while Rossel continued to pick up his aggression in hopes of turning things around. He managed to get inside and reach Cazares at times, but his shots appeared to have little effect. In the seventh, Cazares capitalized again on the increased chances Rossel was giving him as "El Incredible" scored another brief knockdown.

[THE RING Fighter of the Month]

Ryol Li Lee

The unknown Lee was just supposed to be another easy alphabet defense for Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym. The Thai slugger was the most feared fighter at 122 pounds, having won 17 straight, including 14 by knockout. He sat atop THE RING ratings and appeared set to follow the recent trend of Asian titlists who build long reigns with the help of token defenses.

So much for that. Lee outboxed Kratingdaenggym over 12 rounds to capture a version of the WBA belt via unanimous decision in one of 2010's biggest upsets. The lanky Lee, who had advantages of 4" in height and 3" in reach, used movement and accurate counterpunching to befuddle his stronger opponent. Unable to tag Lee cleanly, Kratingdaenggym was tagged throughout and suffered cuts above both eyes.

It was a stunning turn of events. Lee, a Japan-born Korean, was barely known even among Japanese fans. He was reportedly an unaccomplished 47-8 as an amateur, and the WBA, which hands out mandatory rankings like Halloween candy, only had him ranked 14th. Lee did win the country's national featherweight title earlier in the year and had a notable 2009 win against Hiroyuki Enoki.

"There is always a chance for anyone," he told the *Bangkok Post* before the fight. And against Kratingdaenggym, Lee made sure he didn't waste his chance.

PHOTO BY YOSHIKAZU TSUNO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Vazquez (left) fought off a strong challenge from Hernandez

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

With no chance of getting a decision, Rossel boldly decided to go for broke in the ninth. He unleashed a wild assault at the start of the round, and the two mixed it up in a thrilling exchange that didn't last long. Cazares connected with another big right hand that dropped Rossel to his knees, prompting referee Gustavo Padilla (Panama) to stop it 31 seconds into the ninth.

Cazares has gone seven straight fights without a loss since dropping a technical decision to Calderon in their August 2008 rematch at 108 pounds.

Promoter: **KO Entertainment**
(10-9-10)

Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. KO 11
Ivan Hernandez

Kissimmee, Florida: WBO junior featherweight beltholder Vazquez battled through some competitive early rounds to score an impressive late-round stoppage of Hernandez, giving fans at the Silver Spurs Arena a night to remember.

The fight was the main event of a pay-per-view show called "The Rising Son Returns," and it was certainly a nice homecoming for Vazquez Jr., who has fought many times in Kissimmee, going all the way back to his pro debut in 2006. Vazquez fought his last two bouts in Puerto Rico, including his title-winning bout against Marvin Sonsona. This was his second title defense, and, along with returning to Kissimmee, he showed that he is gradually living up to the Vazquez name.

"This man here is the one who raised me," Vazquez Jr. said after the bout, acknowledging his famous father who now trains him. The senior Vazquez enjoyed WBA title reigns at 118, 122, and 126 back in the 1980s and '90s. "What I do is follow his instructions," said Vazquez Jr. "The credit I have to give to my dad."

Hernandez, 122, Ensenada, Mexico, provided plenty of action, forcing Vazquez into several give-and-take exchanges. During the early rounds, it seemed to be a fight that could go either way. Hernandez threw strong combinations, while Vazquez seemed to be pacing himself, waiting for an opening, not wanting to make a mistake against the veteran. Vazquez, 122, Bayamon, Puerto Rico, had a strong fifth round and seemed to be turning the fight in his favor, but, even as late as the seventh round, Hernandez was holding his own and outboxing the WBO boss.

By the 10th, Vazquez' superior strength was showing itself as he rocked Hernandez more than once, particularly with a right hand that snapped Hernandez' head back. Hernandez, who spent much of the round on the ropes absorbing punches, was so dazed by the round's end that he stumbled toward the wrong corner.

Seizing the opportunity to close the show, Vazquez stormed out for round 11 and landed several big shots until referee Telis Assimenios (USA) stopped the bout at the 0:50 mark.

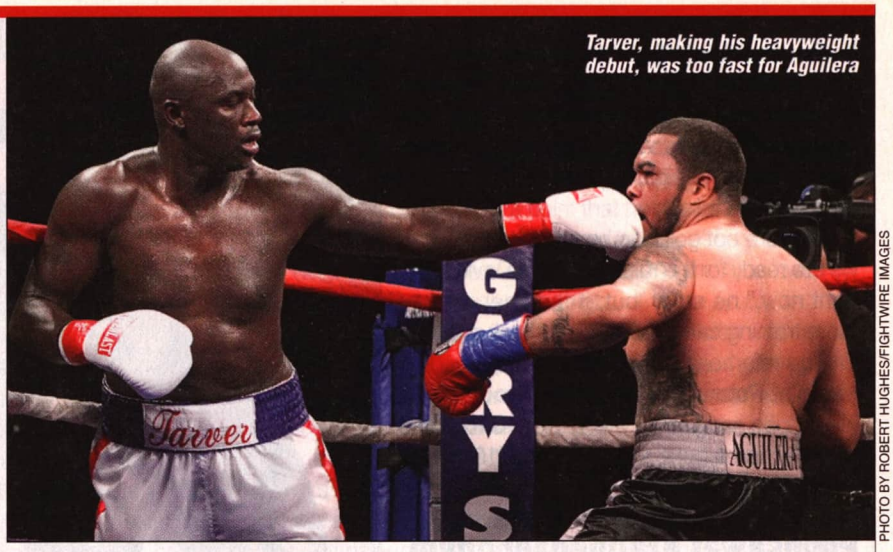
The loss dropped Hernandez to 28-5-1 (17), while Vazquez' record stands at 20-0-1 (17). It was Vazquez' fifth consecutive knockout win. THE RING ranks him eighth at junior featherweight.

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **All Star Boxing**
(10-16-10)

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam W 12
Suriyan Por Chokchai

Si Sa Ket, Thailand: When THE RING champion Wonjongkam, 77-3-1 (41), signed to fight the very ordinary Por Chokchai, 14-5-1 (4), in a makeshift arena in Si Sa Ket, no one gave the challenger a serious chance of winning. Earlier this year, Wonjongkam had destroyed Filipino no-hoper Rey Migreno in 1:37 and outfought undefeated Koki Kameda to win the vacant RING championship. Por Chokchai, on the other hand, had never defeated anyone remotely close to championship quality.

When two Thai fighters square off in their homeland though, fights are almost as much about pride as they are about titles. Moreover, when the very best gives a run-of-the-mill fighter a shot at a title, strange things can happen.



Tarver, making his heavyweight debut, was too fast for Aguilera

PHOTO BY ROBERT HUGHES/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

In the first few rounds, Por Chokchai, Bangkok, gave almost as good as he got, using lively footwork and scoring with his counter left against the southpaw champion. A befuddled Wonjongkam, Nakhon Ratchasima, advanced forward in cruise control, content to bide his time and wait for openings. Gradually, he began to find his rhythm, and, by the sixth, he was scoring more frequently.

The 21-year-old Por Chokchai remained defiant, however, smiling and mugging for the crowd and landing with his jab over Wonjongkam's low right. In the eighth, an unintentional headbutt opened a small cut over the left eye of Wonjongkam, mandating a point deduction from the challenger as per WBC rules (it was also Wonjongkam's first defense of the WBC belt). After eight, the bout was much closer than anyone expected: 76-75 and 77-74 for Wonjongkam, plus an even 76-76 tally.

In the 10th, Wonjongkam switched tactics, moving to the ropes where he laid in wait in an effort to draw in the challenger. Energized at the sight of Wonjongkam against the ropes, Por Chokchai went on the offensive and let his hands go, scoring repeatedly with sharp uppercuts on the inside. The champion fought back with a flurry, catching Por Chokchai with several short, chopping lefts before pushing the action back to the center of the ring. As Por Chokchai moved backward, he proceeded to vomit, narrowly missing the stunned champion. Instead of immediately attacking the body as might be expected, Wonjongkam lingered, and the round ended.

In the following three minutes, Wonjongkam, fighting with a bloodied nose, landed a short right uppercut on the inside and followed up with a left-right combination. Por Chokchai wavered in the breeze, wobbling slightly. With his own reserves dwindling, however, Wonjongkam was unable to capitalize.

In the end, Wonjongkam narrowly averted defeat, and all three judges scored in his favor: Takeaki Kanaya (Japan) 115-114, Belton Douglas (New Zealand) 114-113, and Noppharat Sricharoen (Thailand) 115-112. THE RING had the bout 117-111 in favor of the champion. The biggest question to come from this bout is whether Por Chokchai fought the fight of his life or Wonjongkam had simply fought down to the quality of his opposition, as he's done on several prior occasions. There were talks of a rematch immediately following the bout. However, a fifth battle with Daisuke Naito early next year figures to be the route to a higher payday.

The referee was Bruce McTavish (Philippines).

Promoter: **Nakornluang Boxing Promotion**

(10-8-10)

Scott Mallon

Antonio Tarver W 10 Nagy Aguilera

Miami, Oklahoma: He was 46 pounds over his prime weight and coming off a 17-month layoff, but 41-year-old Tarver managed to win nearly every round in his heavyweight debut, against Aguilera.

The bout took place at The Buffalo Run Casino, and, while it wasn't particularly memorable, Tarver gave himself an A+.

"I had a real guy in front of me," said Tarver, 221, Tampa, Florida. As Tarver told members of the press after the bout, Aguilera was "a live guy, he wasn't going to lay down. You saw that he took some tremendous shots. Anybody with any less heart would have been knocked out, but I take my hat off to Nagy. He came to win, but the decision wasn't in doubt."

Looking a bit pudgy, southpaw Tarver needed a few rounds to shake off the ring rust. From the third round on, though, he controlled the bout with right jabs and enough straight lefts to keep Aguilera wary. Tarver appeared to injure a shoulder early in the bout, but he was never in trouble and showed himself to be Aguilera's master. All three American judges, Duane Ford, Gerald Ritter, and David Sutherland, scored the bout 98-92 for "Magic Man" Tarver. Meanwhile, Aguilera falls to 16-5 (11).

Most noticeable about Tarver was his hand speed. In his recent bouts with Chad Dawson, Tarver seemed slower and unable to match Dawson's tempo. But against a heavyweight plodder like Aguilera, Tarver seemed relatively quick. It must've been comforting for Tarver to once again be the faster man in the ring.

"I didn't get hit with much," Tarver said. "I'm always conscious of the punches. We are not that brave, where we are going to stand in there and take unnecessary punishment. He caught me with some elbows in the head and sometimes headbutts, but that's part of war."

Tarver landed some effective uppercuts in the middle rounds, but the man who once kayoed Roy Jones with a single shot at 175 never demonstrated a heavyweight punch. Aguilera, 232, Newburgh, New York, by way of the Dominican Republic, was occasionally backed into a corner, but he never seemed intimidated by Tarver. During the 10th, Aguilera showed some offense, but it was not enough to make up for the previous rounds, where Tarver had dominated with ring generalship and a very economical, strategic attack.

Tarver, 28-6 (19), a two-time former RING light heavyweight champion as well as a winner of various alphabet belts at 175, believes his marquee value will help him attract big name heavyweight opponents. But he's not going to rush things.

"We are not going to be naïve to think that we are ready for the Klitschkos and David Haye right now," he said, "but, if they get me two more training camps, they better look out."

The referee was Jay Nady (USA).

Promoter: **Gary Shaw Productions**
Television: **Showtime**
(10-15-10)

PHOTO BY YOSHIKAZU TSUNO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Upstart Lee plants a left in Kratingdaenggym's face

Ryol Li Lee W 12
Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym

Tokyo, Japan: In a candidate for upset of the year, unknown challenger Lee outboxed and confounded Kratingdaenggym, THE RING's top-rated junior featherweight, to capture a stunning unanimous decision at Korakuen Hall,

Kratingdaenggym, 122, Sakon Nakhon, Thailand, was making the fourth defense of the WBA "regular" junior featherweight belt he'd seized from Bernard Dunne a little over a year before. He'd won 17 straight since a 2006 points loss at bantamweight to Wladimir Sidorenko, including 14 by kayo. Lee, 121¾, Yokohama, Japan, was largely unknown, even in Japan. The Japan-born Korean's only noteworthy win was a July 2009 split decision against then-contender Hiroyuki Enoki at 126 pounds.

Lee, 17-1 (8), moved down to challenge Kratingdaenggym, 41-2 (29), whose pressure and effective punching won him the opening round. Lee looked shaky early, with his chin held high and his head stationary. But in the second, the 5'8½" Lee began to put his height and three-inch reach advantage to good use against the 5'4½" Kratingdaenggym. Lee also showed good footwork as he constantly moved out of range whenever the Thai got close.

Lee, 28, had the faster hands, though he was very economical with his counterpunches. He was accurate whenever he threw, however, and mixed in a potent lead right uppercut with his long jabs. Kratingdaenggym, 29, often fought flatfooted, firing one big shot at a time that usually missed. On the few occasions that he was able to goad Lee into an exchange, Kratingdaenggym was usually outworked.

Lee was in control after the third. He opened a cut above Kratingdaenggym's left eyebrow with a right hand in the fifth, then another over his right eyebrow in an eighth round that saw Lee do some of his best work of the night. Lee appeared to be tiring in the 10th when a still-aggressive Kratingdaenggym landed enough clean shots to take the round. Lee dug deep and countered effectively as he staved off Kratingdaenggym to take the 11th and 12th rounds.

Derek Milham (Australia) scored it 118-110 for Lee, while Pinit Prayadsab (Thailand) and Jean-Francois Toupin (France) had it closer for Lee at 115-113 and 115-114, respectively. THE RING scored it 116-112, also for Lee, who crashed THE RING ratings at number two, while Kratingdaenggym slipped to third. The referee was Kazunobu Asao (Japan).

Promoter: **Yokohama Hikari Promotions**
(10-2-10)

Luis Concepcion KO 1
Denkaosan Kaovichit

Panama City, Panama: Though it was the main event of the WBA's annual "KO Drugs" show, veteran flyweight Kaovichit proved to be the true kayo victim as Concepcion made a major statement at Roberto Duran Arena.

Concepcion, 112, Panama City, Panama, floored the 34-year-old Kaovichit three times in 90 seconds before referee Rafael Ramos (Puerto Rico) stopped the slaughter. Though Kaovichit, 112, Samui, Thailand, had been showing signs of decline in recent fights, few expected the 25-year-old Concepcion to take him out so quickly. In 54 career bouts, Kaovichit had only suffered one previous stoppage loss, an 11th-round technical knockout, to Eric Morel in 2002.

But a fired-up Concepcion, 22-1 (17), attacked from the opening bell. He quickly drilled the former WBA flyweight beltholder with a left hook to the chin that sent the Thai back into the ropes and then down to the floor. Kaovichit was badly hurt but beat the count. "El Nica" was all over him the moment action resumed, and his swarm of blows caused a reeling Kaovichit to briefly swipe the canvas with his gloves, resulting in the second knockdown.

After receiving precious seconds of recovery time, Kaovichit tried to reassert himself and survive with bodyshots, while Concepcion calmly waited for an opening. It didn't take long. Concepcion connected with a right uppercut-left hook combo that put Kaovichit down for a third time. Ramos waved his arms without even attempting a count, and Concepcion rejoiced with a back flip off the ropes.

For Concepcion, it was the third defense of the worthless WBA "interim" belt, which supposedly gives him first crack at full-time beltholder Daiki Kameda. More importantly, Concepcion moved up to fourth in THE RING ratings. It was his sixth straight kayo victory. Kaovichit, who registered a pair of unimpressive wins against mediocre competition after losing his belt on points to Kameda in February, fell from fourth to sixth.

Promoter: **Promociones y Eventos del Istmo**

(10-2-10)

Daiki Kameda W 12 Takefumi Sakata

Tokyo, Japan: A week after boxing observers on one side of the globe grumbled about Shane Mosley vs. Sergio Mora and labeled it an ugly fight that could have been scored a few different ways, fight aficionados on the other side of the world got their own version of Mosley-Mora. Kameda retained the WBA flyweight belt for the first time over 12 dreary, hard-to-score rounds, defeating former beltholder Sakata by unanimous decision at Tokyo Big Sight.

The 30-year-old Sakata appeared to throw and land more punches in most of the rounds, but it was Kameda, 21, who seemed more effective. He played the Mora role in that he hardly stood still, did some clever boxing, held his opponent quite a bit, and ultimately landed the cleaner shots. The biggest difference between this fight and Mosley-Mora was that the best Mora could get was a draw (and many in the press thought that was overly generous), whereas the judges appreciated Kameda's work and awarded him a comfortable decision even though most ringsiders thought it was an extremely close fight.

Japanese TV-ratings magnet Kameda, the younger brother of even bigger superstar Koki Kameda, has been known to fight dirty and to showboat at times, and his most negative qualities were certainly on display in this tedious affair. While Sakata forced the fight, Kameda, 112, Tokyo, counterpunched sporadically and held when Sakata got close. The third round was typical of the fight, with Sakata, 112, Tokyo, plugging forward and landing numerous soft punches, only to nearly hit the canvas from a single, blazing counter left hook just before the bell, costing him a point that he seemingly had in his pocket. Adding to Sakata's problems: a clash of heads opened a cut over his right eyebrow in the third, and the blood was an annoyance to him the rest of the fight.

Through eight rounds, the fight was close—many at ringside had the busier Sakata narrowly ahead—but youth played a role down the stretch. Sakata's output slowed down, whereas Kameda was able to continue landing the occasional big shot, including one in the ninth that opened a bad cut over Sakata's left eye.

Sakata appeared completely exhausted by round 12, and Kameda finally began playing the role of aggressor, sensing that Sakata didn't have enough left to worry him. Sakata, 36-6-2 (17), kept trying, but he couldn't get any good work done and was arguably swept over the final four rounds.

That strong finish seemed to give Kameda a slight edge in the minds of most in the crowd, but the way the judges scored it, he didn't need a big finish at all. Alfredo Polanco (Mexico) scored it the closest at 116-112, Wansoo Yuh (South Korea) saw it 117-112, and Lahcen Pumghar (Netherlands) had it a blowout at 118-110. The referee was South African veteran Stanley Christodoulou.

Kameda, 18-2 (11), said after the fight that making weight has become a burden and indicated he'd likely move up to junior bantam. He then serenaded the crowd by singing and playing an original song on an electric piano. The performance was greeted warmly by Kameda's fans, but Sakata's supporters, who objected to the nature of Kameda's boxing display and the decision in his favor, filed out as soon as the titleholder began singing.

Promoter: **Kyoei Promotions**

(9-25-10)

PHOTO TORU YAMANAKA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Kameda beats Sakata to the punch with a left

John Murray TKO 9 Andriy Kustriavtsev

Wigan, England: There's a lot to like about Murray. The 25-year-old European lightweight champion (rated sixth by THE RING) is relentlessly aggressive and never stops punching. He has a rock-solid chin, impressive physical strength, and he's heavy-handed without being a one-punch knockout artist, so his bouts tend to last until the later rounds, guaranteeing the fans a decent scrap.

And yet … it's not good enough. Despite a 30-0 (18) record, he needs to tighten his game to have much hope against the likes of division leaders Juan Manuel Marquez or Michael Kat-

sidis. His love of a tear-up means he makes big meals out of tasty morsels.

Murray, 134¼, Manchester, England, can be an accomplished boxer when he feels like it—good head movement, sharp jab, and tight defense. But that's not his way. He prefers neglecting his height (5'8") and 70-inch reach by standing in the zone, up close and personal, firing away until the other fellow wilts, which means he takes too many punches.

These strengths and weaknesses were amply on display at the Robin Park Centre against Kudriavtsev, 34-8 (15). The 34-year-old Kudriavtsev, 133¾, Kerch, Ukraine, is a capable European-level pressure fighter who arrived with seven losses, but only two defeats in his most recent 32 bouts.

The way to beat him painlessly, as Paulus Moses showed three years ago, is with lateral movement and a pesky jab, but that's not Murray's game. Instead, he ground out his win by fighting Kudriatvtsev's fight. He went all out to brawl with Kudriavtsev, who was only too happy to oblige. The Englishman won the first four rounds by throwing just a few more with a bit more venom, but there wasn't much in it. In rounds five and six, it was the visitor's turn to edge it as he landed several tasty rights.

It was looking like a long night until Murray followed his corner's instructions to give himself more room. While continuing to work the body, he started to place his shots and slip or block those that came back. By the eighth, Kudriavtsev showed signs of wilting: backing off and glancing at his corner. He was slow off his stool for the ninth, and Murray went out to overwhelm, using his strength to bully the older man. Late in the round, a vicious right cross to the chin prompted a pronounced leg wobble, and, after two more punches, referee Manuel Oliver (Spain) stepped in. The time was 2:39.

"It was very tough," said Murray, who emerged with bruises around both eyes. "I punched really well in the opening rounds. I lost my way a little bit in the middle rounds, but I came back strong. I think that shows my quality."

Promoters: **Matchroom Sport, Hennessy Sports**

(9-25-10)

Gavin Evans

Lucian Bute KO 9 Jesse Brinkley

Montreal, Canada: Although Brinkley was the IBF's mandatory challenger, he was supposed to represent an easy outing for the 30-year-old Bute, who had to work to garner a ninth-round kayo. Most pundits agreed that Brinkley, 33, was a soft opponent for Bute, who is arguably boxing's fastest rising star and a full-blown celebrity in his adopted home of Montreal, Quebec. But not even the paying public, which normally number more than 14,000 in Montreal for a Bute fight, were convinced Brinkley had the stuff of a live opponent. This time, only 11,692 elected to show at the Bell Centre to watch Bute, ranked number one by THE RING at super middleweight, defend the IBF strap for the sixth time.

In fact, in the lead up to the fight, even Bute's trainer, Stephane Larouche, committed a form of marketing suicide by predicting an easy ending within four rounds. Chagrined, he later attributed the prolonged bout to Brinkley's "awkwardness."

Make no mistake, "awkwardness" in this case was code for: "We underestimated Brinkley, and he was a better fighter than we thought."

The truth is, Brinkley, 35-6 (22), a former star from Season One of the reality TV series *The Contender*, proved anything but awkward. His punches in the early going were sharp and equal to Bute's in speed. And his ability to read and slip punches with adept head movement, along with his ability to negotiate the ring and move into punching range, was impressive.

Most importantly, Brinkley, 167½, Yerington, Nevada, arrived in Montreal with a game plan. And while he failed to execute it to perfection, an otherwise disposable defense for Bute, 167½, Montreal via Romania, will be studied by trainers in the future for the subtle flaws Brinkley was able to expose. If nothing else, Brinkley affirmed Bute, 27-0 (22), is a superb fighter and viscous finisher when he fights in reverse, but he is vulnerable when assuming the role of aggressor. Even so, it will just take a fighter considerably superior to Brinkley to fully exploit the weaknesses.

Bute occasionally grinned with surprise when Brinkley zapped him with straight right hands in the first three rounds of the fight. That Bute allowed his lead right to lazily swing low at his waist was either an attempt to show disdain for his opponent or a relaxation strategy, but, either way, it invited jabs from Brinkley that helped to successfully set up openings for the right.

Even the size differential, with Brinkley standing 5'10" to Bute's 6'2", somewhat played to Brinkley's advantage in the opening rounds. Many of Bute's punches sailed harmlessly over Brinkley's head as the challenger kept his feet and upper body in fluid movement so as not to offer a stationary target.

Of course, Brinkley knew what everybody else knew from recent history: Allowing Bute to set up a left to the body is a guaranteed invitation to extreme peril and an early night. And as witnessed against Librado Andrade and Edison Miranda, Bute, who has rare talent for fighting superbly while backing up, is a master at executing the punch while in reverse motion.

Brinkley's first lapse in his otherwise effective strategy came at the end of the fifth, when Bute lured him into the aggressor's role and landed a debilitating left uppercut to the breadbasket that collapsed the American to all fours with anguish written across his face. No one would have faulted Brinkley for surrendering on the spot, but he showed uncommon courage and resolve by rising from the canvas and making it to the final bell. A slow count by referee Sam Williams (USA) certainly helped, as did his subsequent call for Brinkley's corner to fix some loose tape on his glove. But a lesser fighter would have only seen futility in standing up to that sort of firepower from Bute and found a quicker exit.

Not Brinkley. To his credit, he stayed competitive in rounds six and seven and looked poised to go the distance until a cut above his left eye early in round eight clearly began to trouble him. As the round unfolded, it was clear Bute's punches were exacting a toll, and a smashing uppercut finally crumbled

Brinkley for a second time at the round's end. Brinkley courageously rose to his feet again, but, with blood oozing from his eye and an obviously broken nose, it was only a matter of time before Bute administered the finish.

Remarkably, Brinkley fought through most of the ninth, as Bute pursued him with near impunity, looking to cut off the ring and set up the knockout, which ultimately came at the 2:48 mark. Once more, Bute would invite Brinkley into an aggressor's role and set up his left uppercut, which landed flush on Brinkley's chin and sent him sprawling on his back. While still conscious, it was obvious that the punch and the cumulative punishment endured by Brinkley had been more than enough, and he stayed on the canvas, where he was counted out by Williams, ending a remarkably gutsy effort by the underdog.

In the aftermath, the Romanian-born Bute openly showed admiration and respect for his opponent. In reality, he may have been looking past Brinkley to a widely rumored fight with Kelly Pavlik that has already received blessings from HBO. Assuming Pavlik gets by Brian Vera in their November bout, a tentative date has been secured in March that will see him face off against Bute in Montreal in a fight that, unlike the Brinkley affair, will be a guaranteed sell out.

Television: **ESPN3**
Promoters: **Interbox, Let's Get It On Promotions**
(10-15-10)

Nathan Cleverly KO 10 Karo Murat

Birmingham, England: Ken Buchanan, Howard Winstone, Terry Downes, John Conteh, Barry McGuigan, Frank Bruno, Nigel Benn, Ricky Hatton, Joe Calzaghe, and Naseem Hamed are some of the names to have won the prestigious British Boxing Writers' Young Boxer of the Year award. The most recent recipient, Cleverly, 173¾, Cefn Fforest, Wales, continued on his path toward a title shot at light heavyweight with an emphatic victory against Murat, 173½, Klitzingen, Germany, via Iraq, at the LG Arena.

Although Cleverly might lack experience and a certain know-how, promoter Frank Warren, who promoted and managed many of the above winners of the British scribes' accolade, is convinced that the 23-year-old "can be a big star." A recent graduate in mathematics at Cardiff University, clever

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

Bute floors Brinkley en route to knockout victory

Cleverly also brings an assiduous work ethic into the ring and, increasingly, packs a punch to augment the skill and ambition that has always been evident in his work. Murat had stopped 13 of his previous 21 opponents in a four-year career, but the force was clearly with Cleverly from the first bell.

Murat, 22-1 (13), was shaken by a hard left hook and a subsequent right uppercut in the opening round, and, when he retaliated in the second, Cleverly responded with another strong uppercut and the more accurate, more sustained punching. The Germany-based Iraqi, whose Armenian parents fled persecution in Iraq for Bavaria during the first Gulf War, weathered another withering right hand in round three before he fought back and landed a series of blows to the head. The action was heated and the terms of engagement gruelingly long before it reached a climax.

Cleverly boxed well behind his jab in round four, but Murat countered effectively. And the pace was raised again in the fifth as the two traded punches. Murat was hurt again in the sixth by several hard lefts from Cleverly, and a cut developed along the bridge of his nose in the eighth. Another uppercut stunned Murat near the end of the round, and a big right shook him early in the ninth. Incredibly, he fought back again even though 6'1½" Cleverly was utilizing his advantages in height and reach over his 5'10½" opponent to devastating effect. As they came out for the 10th round, however, American referee Mark Nelson, after consulting with the doctor, decided enough was enough and waved it over just as the round was set to begin.

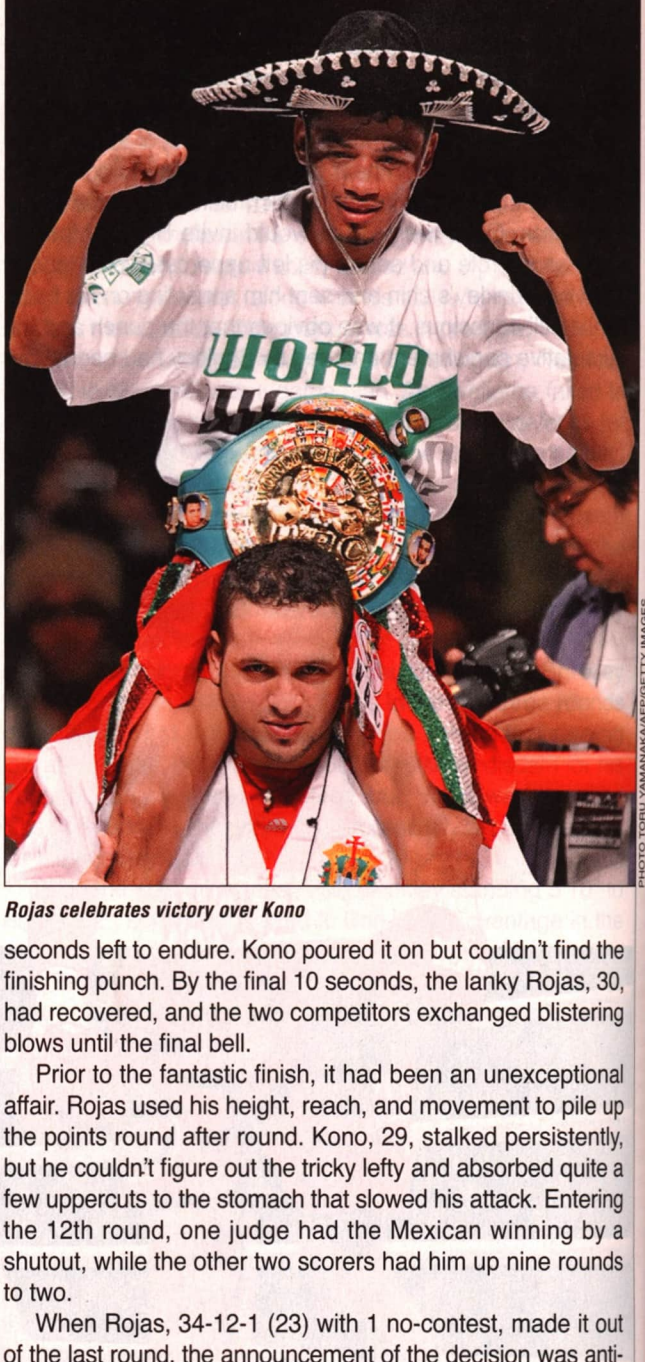
"I hope to have a couple of title belts on my waist by the end of 2011," said Cleverly, 20-0 (10), who was scheduled to contest an "interim" WBO light heavyweight title bout December 11.

Promoter: **Frank Warren**
(9-18-10)
Brian Doogan

Tomas Rojas W 12 Kohei Kono

Saitama, Japan: If at first you fail to win an alphabet title, wait for some random belt to become vacant and try, try again. With WBC 115-pound titlist Vic Darchinyan planning a move up to bantamweight and the sanctioning body naming Darchinyan "champion emeritus" at junior bantam, veterans Rojas and Kono came together at the Super Arena to fight for the vacant trinket. Kono had lost a split decision to Nobuo Nashiro in 2008 for a belt, and Rojas was knocked out in the second round by Darchinyan in a 2009 title try. But they each got a second chance, and it was the Mexican southpaw Rojas who prevailed, surviving a scary final-round knockdown to win a unanimous decision.

For 11 rounds, Rojas, 115, Veracruz, Mexico, put on a dominant boxing display, and, for one round, Kono, 115, Tokyo, Japan, threatened to turn the fight into Jake LaMotta vs. Laurent Dauthuille or Mike Weaver vs. John Tate. The local fighter landed a single, sudden right hand that sent Rojas reeling and then put him on the canvas hard with a follow-up assault. Rojas bounced back to his feet quickly, but, at the conclusion of American referee Frank Garza's eight-count, he was still unsteady and had a minute and 15



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Rojas celebrates victory over Kono

seconds left to endure. Kono poured it on but couldn't find the finishing punch. By the final 10 seconds, the lanky Rojas, 30, had recovered, and the two competitors exchanged blistering blows until the final bell.

Prior to the fantastic finish, it had been an unexceptional affair. Rojas used his height, reach, and movement to pile up the points round after round. Kono, 29, stalked persistently, but he couldn't figure out the tricky lefty and absorbed quite a few uppercuts to the stomach that slowed his attack. Entering the 12th round, one judge had the Mexican winning by a shutout, while the other two scorers had him up nine rounds to two.

When Rojas, 34-12-1 (23) with 1 no-contest, made it out of the last round, the announcement of the decision was anti-climactic. Steve Morrow (USA) saw it 118-109, while Stephan Blea (USA) and Malcolm Bulner (Australia) scored it 116-111.

"Had [the knockdown] happened earlier, the result might have been different," lamented Kono, 25-5 (9). "But I admit Rojas cleverly and coolly outmaneuvered me all the way."

Rojas said after the victory that he wanted another shot at Darchinyan, but with "The Raging Bull" involved in Showtime's bantamweight tournament and, given how quickly Rojas was defeated by the Australia-based puncher the first time, that seems unlikely.

Promoter: **Watanabe Promotions**
(9-20-10) ■

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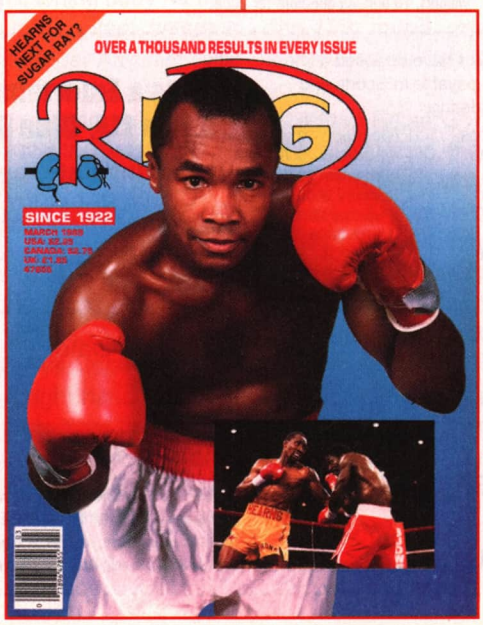

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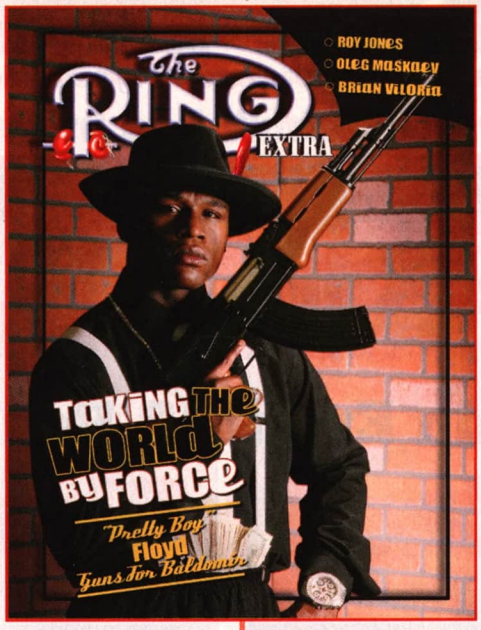

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Alfonso Gomez

Main Event 12 Rounds

Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.

PHOTO BY MATTHEW LEWIS/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

The next step in the education of Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. takes place on December 4 at the Honda Center in Anaheim, California. The man in the other corner will be Alfonso Gomez, the scrappy little battler who fought and charmed his way into fans' hearts during his stint on the first season of The Contender.

In terms of fighting skills, Gomez is a considerable step up, but the fact that Chavez is a larger man gives him an advantage he wouldn't have if Gomez were a full-fledged middleweight. Still, Gomez is riding a four-fight winning streak and is the sort of guy who relishes the underdog role.

While this isn't a loser-should-retire type match, it will certainly go a long way to deciding both men's immediate future—and figures to be a fun fight to boot.

Alfonso Gomez

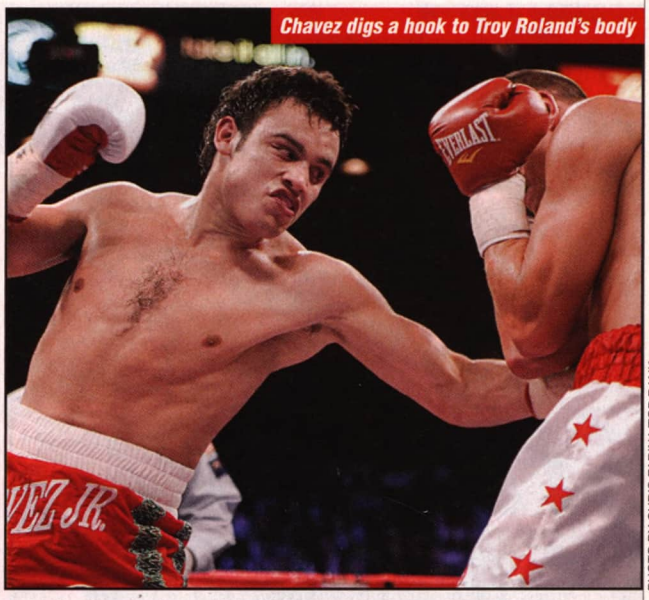
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.

Record and World Rating

Gomez drills Jesus Soto-Karass with a right

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Is 22-4-2 with 11 knockouts ... Began boxing at the age of 10 and tallied an 80-10 amateur career under the tutelage of his father, Alfonso Gomez Sr. ... Turned pro in May 2001 ... Selected as a participant in NBC's *The Contender* in 2004 ... Soon became one of the reality TV show's most popular cast members, but lost in the semifinals ... Has gone 10-1-1 (7) in post-*Contender* career ... Is not ranked by THE RING.



Chavez digs a hook to Troy Roland's body

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Is 41-0-1 with 30 knockouts and 1 no-contest ... Turned pro in September 2003 at the age of 17 after only three amateur bouts ... Became an instant attraction due to the fact he is the son of the legendary Julio Cesar Chavez ... Unblemished record ended in December '05 with a draw ... Won next 17 in a row before testing positive for an illegal substance in November '09, which resulted in the bout being declared no-contest ... Is not ranked by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment

Jose Luis Castillo absorbs a Gomez bodyshot

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Is 30 years old ... Stands 5'9" with a 69-inch reach ... Seems best suited to the welterweight division, but has fought as heavy as 159½ pounds ... Always in good condition despite somewhat soft-looking body type ... Quick hands ... Energetic legs ... Agile upper-body movement ... Eye cuts have been a problem.

Chavez en route to kayo of Ray Sanchez

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Is 24 years old ... Stands 6' with a 73-inch reach ... Turned pro at 130 pounds and has gradually grown into a 160-pounder ... Is stronger than his spindly physique appears to indicate ... Enjoys height and reach advantage over most adversaries ... Average hand and foot speed ... Good chin.

Alfonso Gomez

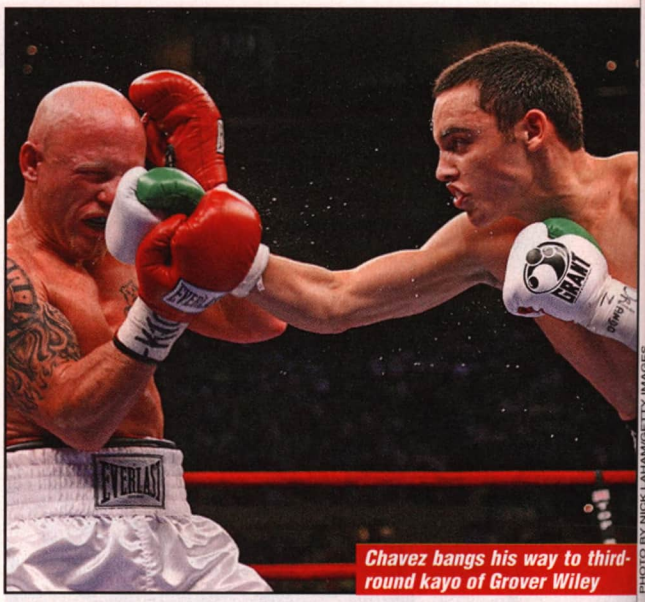
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.

Best Weapons

Luciano Perez samples Gomez' right uppercut

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Good combination puncher … Although far from a knockout artist, throws crisp, accurate punches with both hands … Digs well to the body … Courageous and willing to take risks.



Chavez bangs his way to third-round kayo of Grover Wiley

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Left hook to the body isn't as good as his father's, but it is still a potent punch … Learning to use his height, reach, and left jab to greater effect from the outside … Confident and relaxed in the ring.

Previous Fight

Stopped former world lightweight champion Jose Luis Castillo at the end of the fifth round of a scheduled 10-rounder on March 13 in Arlington, Texas … Too quick for shopworn, 36-year-old ex-champ … Gradually increased punch output as bout progressed and was virtually landing at will when Castillo's team wisely decided to keep him on his stool.

Won a 12-round unanimous decision over hard-hitting John Duddy on June 6 in San Antonio, Texas, by scores of 116-112, 117-111, and an absurd 120-108 … Turned in the best performance of his career against arguably the best opponent to date … Except for being wobbled in the sixth round, he generally controlled the action with a steady two-handed attack.

Quality of Opposition

Matched tough practically from the start, losing a four-rounder to Ishe Smith in second pro outing … Beat fellow prospects Michael Santos (W 6), Juan Carlos Amezcua (KO 3), and Dumont Welliver (W 4) … Began *Contender* tournament by handing Peter Manfredo Jr. his first loss (W 5) and upsetting Ahmad Kaddour (W 5) … Other quality victories came against Arturo Gatti (KO 7), Carson Jones (KO 8), and Ben Tackie (W 10) … Outclassed by Miguel Cotto (KO by 5).

Carefully protected throughout most of career, feasting on the likes of Guadalupe Arce, Joe Luis Burgos, and Antonio Aguilar (none of whom had won a pro fight when they faced him) … Gradually stepped up to fellow prospects and journeymen, including Carlos Molina (D 6, W 6), Aaron Drake (KO 2), Grover Wiley (KO 3), Ray Sanchez (KO 8), Matt Vanda (W10, W 10), Luciano Leonel Cuello (W 10), Jason LeHoullier (KO 10), and Duddy (W 12).

Defense

Adept at bobbing and weaving on the inside … Knows how to use his legs to move out of the danger zone but sometimes abandons defense in his enthusiasm to mix it up … Discourages aggressive adversaries with good counterpunching skills … Sturdy chin is a plus.

Shockingly easy to tag considering his reach and height advantage but is showing improvement due to increased use of long-range boxing … Many opponents too worried about survival to launch their own attack … Has shown defensive improvement since switch to trainer Freddie Roach.

Alfonso Gomez

Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.

Style

Well-schooled pressure fighter who is somewhat hampered by his lack of a big punch … Abundance of courage and fan-friendly style can lead to more exchanges than absolutely necessary … Resilient, never-say-die attitude.

Gomez brutally ends Arturo Gatti's career

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Chavez hammers John Duddy for career-best win

PHOTO BY ROBERT HUGES/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

A work in progress … Appeared to grow lazy on a steady diet of easy foes, but seems reinvigorated under Roach's guidance … Skill set beginning to catch up with his natural ability … Prone to lash back immediately when tagged.

The Questions

How much of a handicap will it be fighting at middleweight, especially as he only weighed 145 for his most recent bout? Can he get inside Chavez' reach advantage? Does he punch hard enough to earn Chavez' respect? Will his greater experience against quality opposition carry him to an upset win?

Have too many easy fights adequately prepared him for an adversary as versatile as Gomez? Can he handle Gomez' hand speed? Would it have been better to wait for more schooling under Roach's guidance before taking this step up? Will an impressive victory propel him into a superfight with Miguel Cotto?

The Outcome

It is difficult to envision this being anything other than an action-packed affair. Both men will land their share of punches, but Chavez' significant size advantage should prove a bit too much for Gomez to handle. Look for Junior to tally a decision victory in a competitive, fan-friendly contest.

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Always insightful and often provocative, William Dettloff, The Ring's senior writer, is the thinking-fans' columnist, a writer who never settles for the same old stale commentary you've already read a dozen times. For example, here's Dettloff's take on a handful of hot topics:

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[New Faces]

(Continued from Page 24)

"I never had any friends my own age when I was a kid," he said. "My friends were all older boxers and trainers. They gave me good advice and kept me out of trouble. They made sure I always had food or money to take home. I liked the environment."

Bogere became one of his country's best amateur boxers and five-time African champion. In 2007, he was captain of the Ugandan team, fighting in the World Boxing Championships in Chicago. It was then that Bogere's friendship with another Ugandan boxer changed his life.

Veteran junior lightweight Justin Juuko called his American manager and told him to watch the Ugandan team and to pay special attention to the captain. That manager was Jimmy Alex.

"I could see this kid was special," said Alex. "I watched him a few times and knew that Juuko was right. I talked to Sharif a few times, and then we made a decision."

The decision was not without complications. While mainstream America hardly noticed, a major scandal exploded in the Ugandan newspapers when Bogere "disappeared from training camp." The government and the Ugandan Amateur Boxing Federation expressed their shock and dismay.

The decision wasn't easy to make. Bogere abandoned his high school finals to pursue a slot on the 2008 Olympic

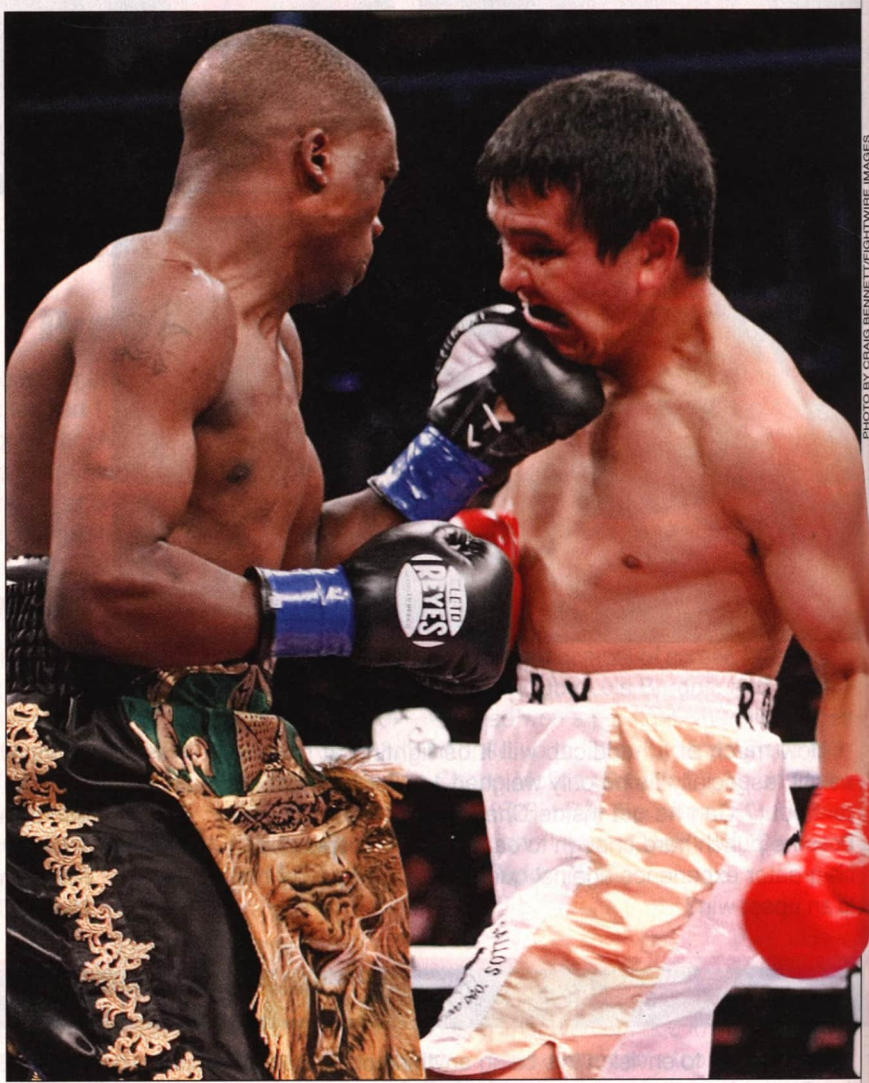

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Undefeated Bogere came through with a kayo of journeyman Julian Rodriguez on the big Mora-Mosley card at the Staples Center. It was the African's 11th kayo in 17 pro bouts.

team, and turning professional meant abandoning Olympic glory. Today, Bogere is convinced it was the right decision.

"It was hard to leave my family to come here, but I knew what I wanted in life," he said. "To progress in my career and become a world champion, I had to come to the States. It was the best thing for my family because I could help them more if I was successful."

Bogere's professional run in 2008 was slowed by inactivity, but it was successful nonetheless. Alex was able to bring aboard respected trainer Kenny Adams, and Sharif got off to a quick start, scoring two first-round knockouts in his first two weeks as an active pro. He would not, however, fight again until September, when he went the distance for the fist time, winning a four-round decision. He went the distance again in October, winning another unanimous decision to close out his first year as a pro.

Bogere had realistic expectations, but was still discouraged.

"Nobody knew me here," he said. "It was hard to get onto cards. I was training all the time, but had several fights that fell through before I could get into the ring."

Co-manager Ralph Heredia, a Southern California businessman with a larger-than-life personality and a vocal vision for his prospect's future, agreed that it was difficult keeping Bogere as busy as everybody in his camp wanted.

"Guys would ask for more money at the last minute," said Heredia. "Some guys didn't show up for fights. It was a struggle, but we made a commitment, Jimmy and I, to keep Sharif fighting every 30 days. We really opened the wallet to make it happen."

They fell slightly short of the mark, but Bogere's nine fights in 2009 made for a full schedule by today's standards and helped build experience. Then, in May, he had his first taste of professional trash talk.

"Marcos Herrera was this tough Mexican kid, 5-0," said Heredia. "When he found out that Sharif was gonna fight again the next week, he really got started. He said, 'Call me the Lion Tamer!' and boasted that he was going to beat Sharif up so bad that there was no way he'd fight a week later."

Nothing Herrera said made any difference. Bogere hurt him every time he hit him, scored multiple knockdowns, and forced referee Kenny Bayless to stop the fight at 2:43 of the second round. Moreover, despite Herrera's dire prediction, Sharif still had enough left to TKO Kevin Carmody the following week.

Given an opportunity to appear on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*, Sharif dealt out the same kind of treatment to once beaten Rodolfo Armenta. The fight coverage was not entirely in The Lion Warrior's favor. Color commentator Teddy Atlas made fun of Bogere's lion skin-clad entrance while talking up Armenta. But once the punches started flying, Bogere proved who was boss.

To date, Bogere's toughest test came against 58-fight veteran Ilido Julio (who had gone the distance with a young Nonito Donaire in 2005) on Telefutura. Julio had a clear strategy to win—come in low and attack the body—but Bogere refused to be discouraged. He showed toughness and patience, finally forcing Julio to quit on his stool at the start of the fifth round.

Bogere's next fight was a coveted spot on the Shane Mosley-Sergio Mora undercard at the Staples Center, where he came through with an impressive second-round knockout of Julian Rodriguez in front of a large crowd of more than 13,000.

Heredia said he would like to see Bogere fight for a title at 135 pounds as soon as possible, perhaps against Humberto Soto.

But that would be a huge step up in class, and a lot of unanswered questions remain. Bogere's power has yet to be tested above the club level. His stance is very open, and, despite good instincts, he isn't hard to hit. It remains to be seen how he'll react when hit by a genuine world-class fighter.

One thing, however, is certain: The American boxing public likes a guy who takes one to give one and scores knockouts. At the very least, it looks like this lion will get an opportunity to try to claw his way to the top. ■

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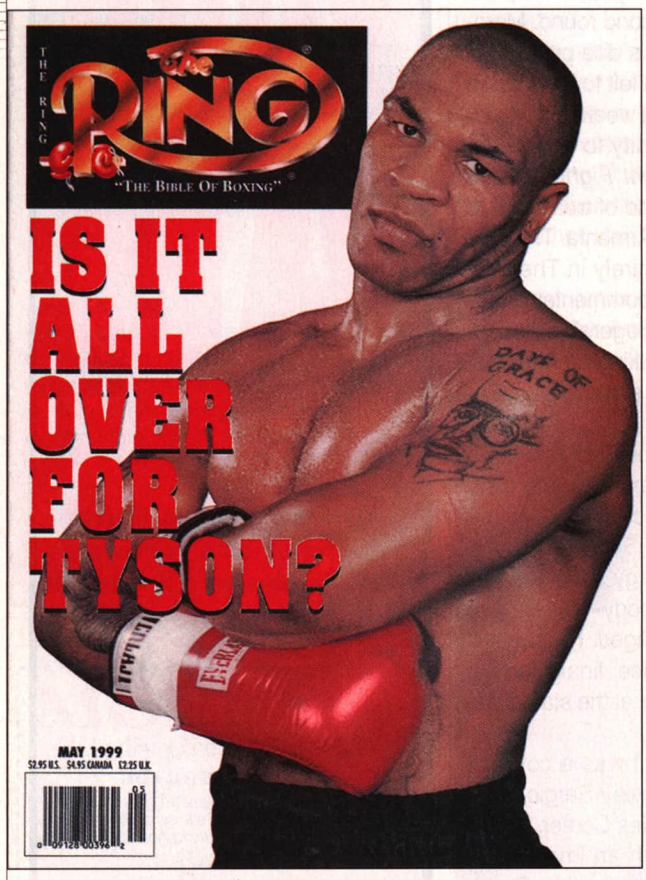
THE RING Flashback

Through the years with "The Bible of Boxing"

May 1999



COVER STORY: "Tick, Tick, Tick ... Is Tyson Ready To Blow?" by Bernard Fernandez delves into the ongoing concerns about Mike Tyson after his license was restored by the Nevada State Athletic Commission, clearing the way for a fight with Frans Botha. A contrite Tyson, who repeatedly apologized for past indiscretions, reverted back to the "Iron Mike" of old when he tried breaking Botha's left arm in the opening round, which resulted in an after-the-bell scuffle that had ringside security scrambling to restore order.

Down on all three scorecards, Tyson landed a thunderous right that ended the fight at 2:59 of the fifth, but the cracks in Tyson's veneer of civility were evident.

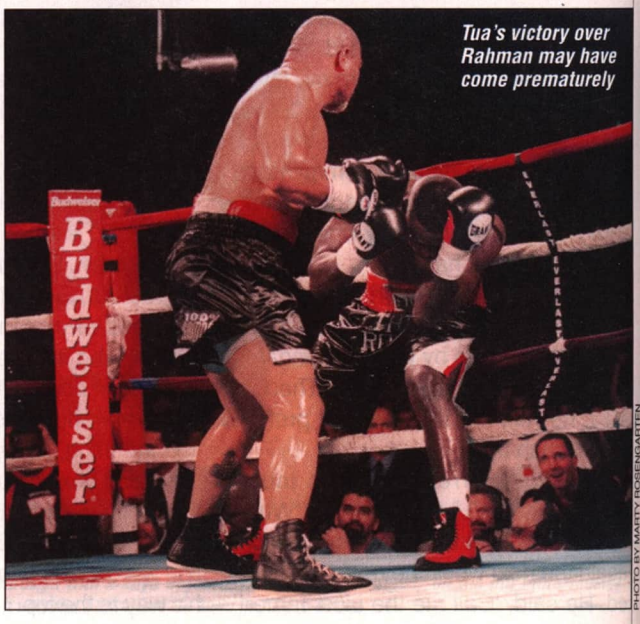
"Pop all the pertinent data into a blender, hit the button, and what do you get?" writes Fernandez. "A concoction guaranteed to leave fans and officials woozier than Botha was after the right hand landed. Tyson is as unpredictable as the exact landing site of a snowflake fluttering to earth, as volatile as an active volcano."

The Botha victory proved to be Tyson's last signature win. He went 2-4 (2), with 2 no-contests, the remainder of his career, getting stopped by Lennox Lewis in a much-anticipated showdown. In the fall of 2010, Tyson was on the ballot and appeared to be a shoe-in for induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

"Safety vs. Common Sense: Are They Stopping Fights Too Soon?" by William Dettloff looks at a recent surge in fights where referees were stepping in and making premature judgments. A few examples are gleaned from the David Tua-Hasim Rahman and Floyd Mayweather-Angel Manfredy tussles. Tua had Rahman in some trouble against the ropes during their heavyweight match in Miami, only to have referee Tellis Assimenios leap in and wave it over in the 10th, despite Tua missing most of his punches. In the case of Mayweather-Manfredy, "Pretty Boy" had Manfredy cornered in the second round when referee Frank Santore intervened.

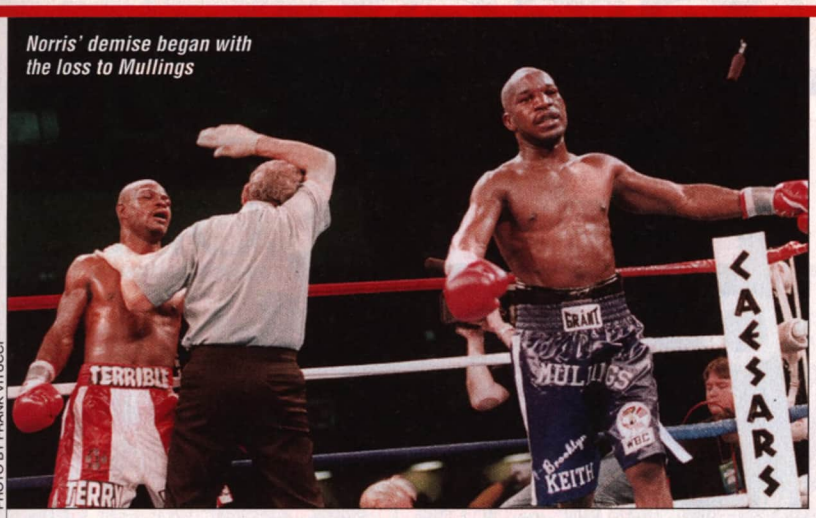
"If you're a purist, you want a definitive ending," writes Dettloff. "You want to know at the end who the better man is, just like at the end of a football game, you want to look at the scoreboard and see the end of the story. Premature stoppages rob us of an ending."

"The Terrible Demise Of Terry Norris" by Robert Mladinich explores the sudden downfall of three-time former junior middleweight titlist Terry Norris after losing his third-straight fight. Just over a year before, Norris was supposed to be in line for his largest payday ever, against Oscar De La Hoya. But losses to Keith Mullings, Dana Rosenblatt,



Tua's victory over Rahman may have come prematurely

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENBAUM



Norris' demise began with the loss to Mullings

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

and WBA junior middleweight titlist Laurent Boudouani prevented that from happening. The Boudouani setback forced Norris to call it quits at 31. The irony is that Norris garnered his largest payday ever, settling a lawsuit out of court with Don King for $7.5 million in 2005, the same year he was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

"Pazmania Is Still Running Wild!" is Jay Miller's account of popular Vinny Paz hanging on in the twilight of his career, still able to fill New England venues. Miller quotes one of Paz' female admirers as saying, "Vinny's like a drug. He's not always good for you, but he's definitely addictive." At 36, Paz was hoping for another title shot, but that didn't come until March 2002 when he was thoroughly beaten by then-WBA super middleweight titlist Eric Lucas. Paz closed out his colorful career with a farewell fight, decisioning Tocker Pudwill in March 2004.

"Mandatory Junk! It's Time For Boxing's Elite To Take A Stand" by Ron Borges examines undeserving mandatory alphabet challengers such as Rick Frazier, who fought Roy Jones in January 1999. The two-round blowout for Jones was so dismal that HBO color analyst Larry Merchant referred to it as "junk." Lou DiBella, then HBO's Senior Vice President, told WBC President Jose Sulaiman the decision to make Frazier a number-one contender was an "embarrassment." Surprisingly, Sulaiman agreed. The article called for boxing's elite to refuse alphabet mandatory defenses against unworthy opponents.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Jones predictably stopped unworthy challenger Frazier in two rounds

"Former Bantamweight Contender Jesus Pimentel: A Knockout Artist Who Couldn't Get A Cotton-Pickin' Break!" by Pete Ehrmann tells the story of "Little Poison," who was never given a title shot during his prime and once was paid a dollar a day for picking cotton. Pimentel eventually got his shot, in December 1971, losing to WBA/WBC titlist and future Hall of Famer Ruben Olivares by 11th-round TKO.

"Fighter Of The Month" honors went to Mike Tyson, not for the torrent of missed shots he threw against Botha, or for trying to break Botha's arm, or for winning just one round on the judge's scorecards. The choice came down strictly to one thing: Tyson's powerful right that landed on Botha's chin, which reminded fans for a fleeting moment of the vintage Iron Mike. ■

World Champions

(THE RING did not have a championship policy in 1999, so the fighters listed below in each weight division are THE RING's number-one contenders for the period ended January 31, 1999.)

Heavyweight: Evander Holyfield
Cruiserweight: Fabrice Tiozzo
Light Heavyweight: Roy Jones
Super Middleweight: Frankie Liles
Middleweight: Bernard Hopkins
Junior Middleweight: Fernando Vargas
Welterweight: Oscar De La Hoya
Junior Welterweight: Vince Phillips
Lightweight: Shane Mosley
Junior Lightweight: Floyd Mayweather
Featherweight: Naseem Hamed
Junior Featherweight: Vuyani Bungu
Bantamweight: Tim Austin
Junior Bantamweight: Mark Johnson
Flyweight: Manny Pacquiao
Junior Flyweight: Saman Sorjaturong
Strawweight: Ricardo Lopez

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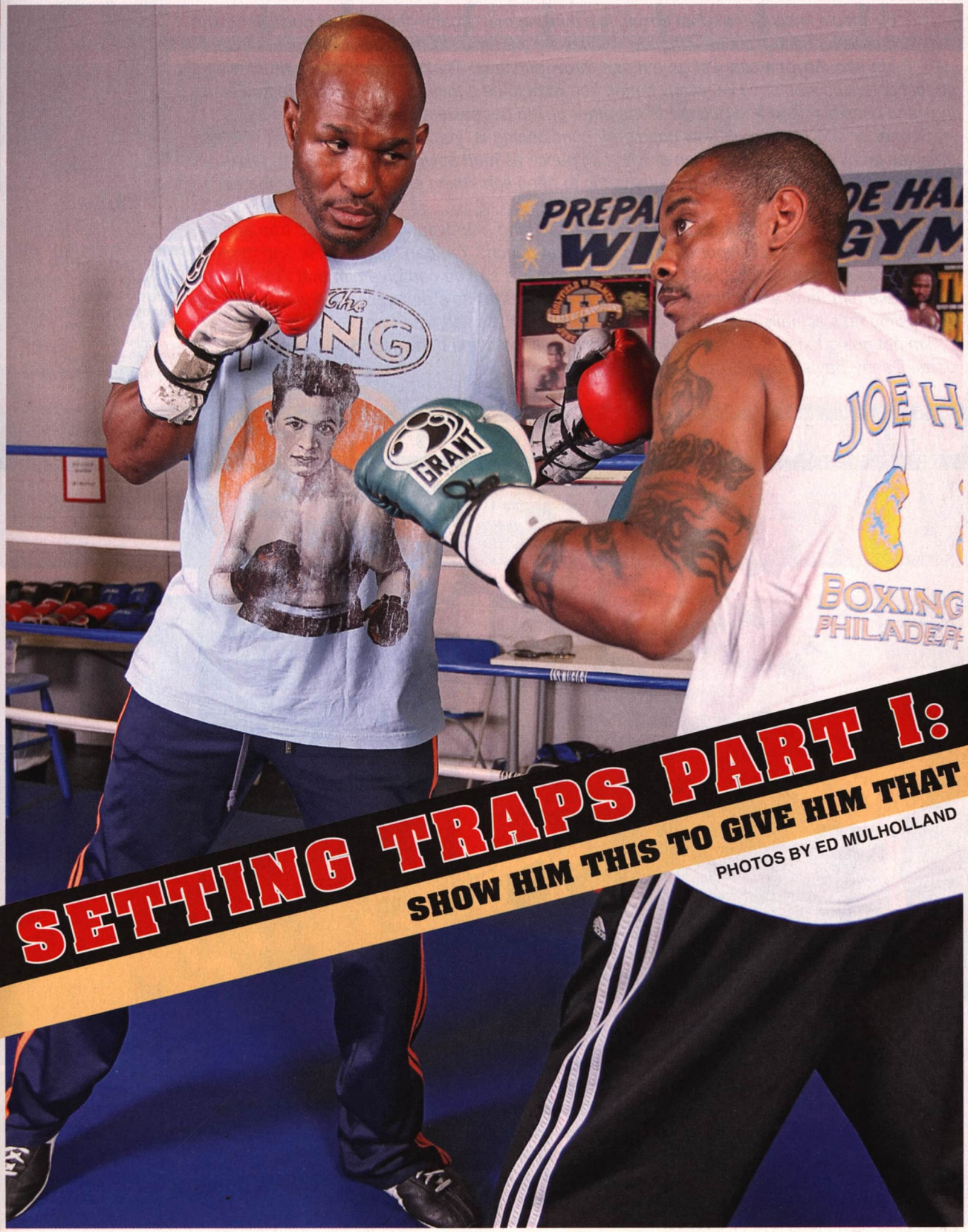
Perfect Execution

Boxing Lessons From A Living Legend

By Bernard Hopkins



SETTING TRAPS PART I:

SHOW HIM THIS TO GIVE HIM THAT

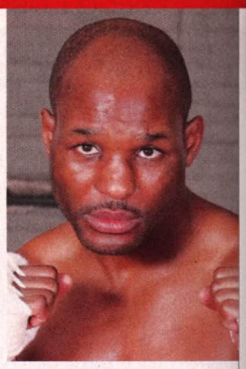
PHOTOS BY ED MULHOLLAND

You should know by now that boxing is a thinking man's game that's about positioning and maneuvering and outsmarting and outthinking your man as much as it is about outpunching him. Anyone can just go out and throw punches. That's what novice amateurs and street fighters do who don't know any better. You want to be a thinking fighter who creates openings and uses his head and outsmarts the other guy to get position.

Sooner or later, no matter how good your conditioning is, you'll meet an opponent who can throw as many punches as you can or who can punch as hard as you can, or who can take your punches without getting hurt. And you're going to need something else. You're going to need to use your brain.

That's where setting traps comes in. You want to land a bodypunch? You set a trap and get your man to walk into it. Is your uppercut your best punch? You can't just walk in and throw it. You have to set him up for it. Set a trap. Show him this so you can give him that. You set the trap. Make him think something's coming that ain't or that he's doing what he wants and the whole time he's actually doing what you want him to. That's setting a trap.

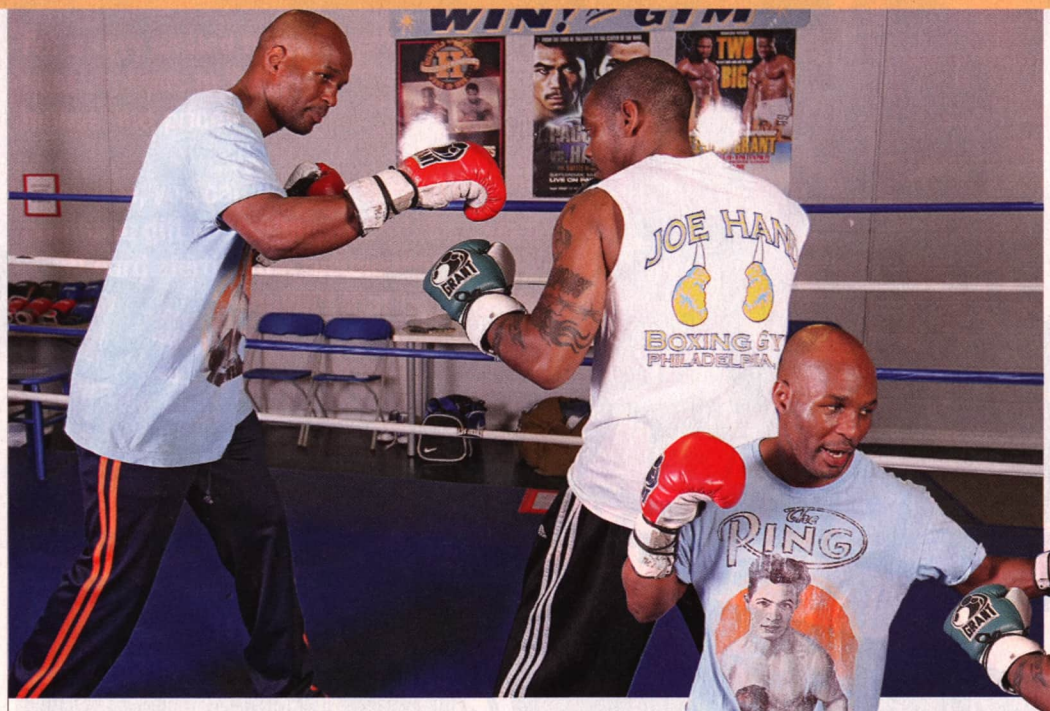
I'm not going to show you all my traps; I have to keep some to myself. But in this first of two parts, Danny Davis and me show you a few of my favorites.



BERNARD HOPKINS
Is the former middleweight and light heavyweight champion of the world.

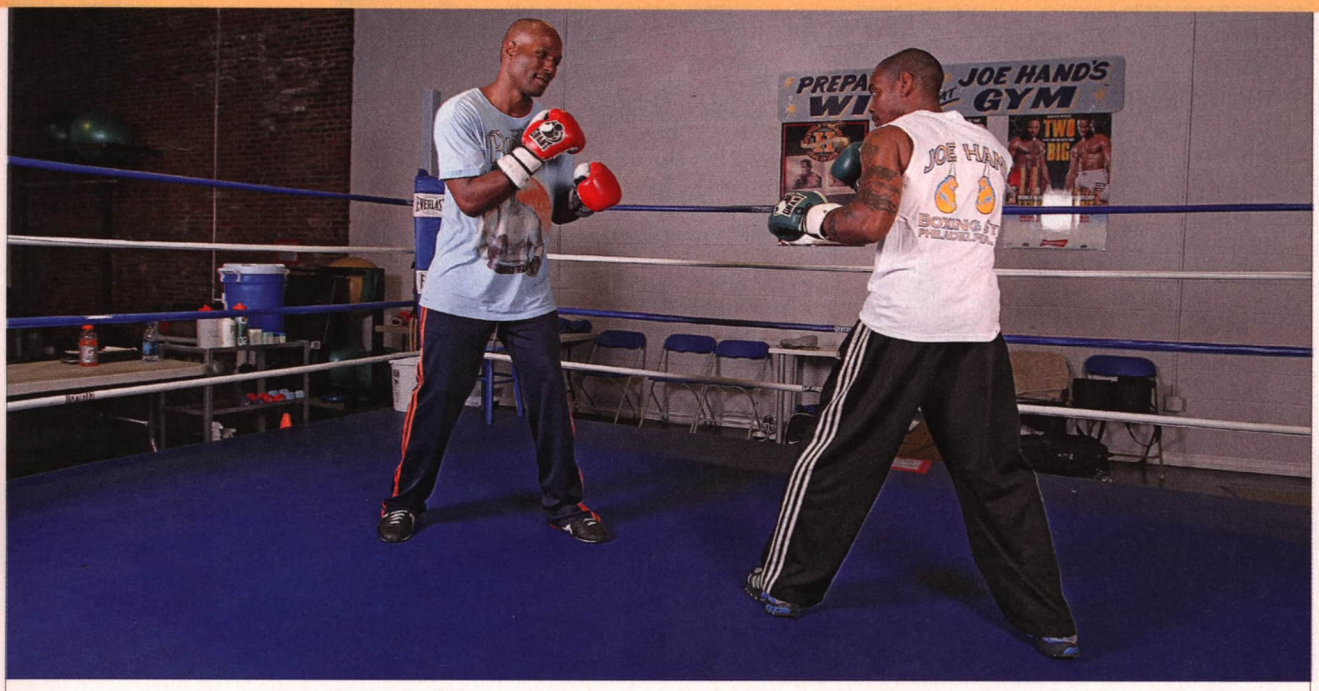
(Photos taken at Joe Hand Boxing Gym: www.joehandboxinggym.com)

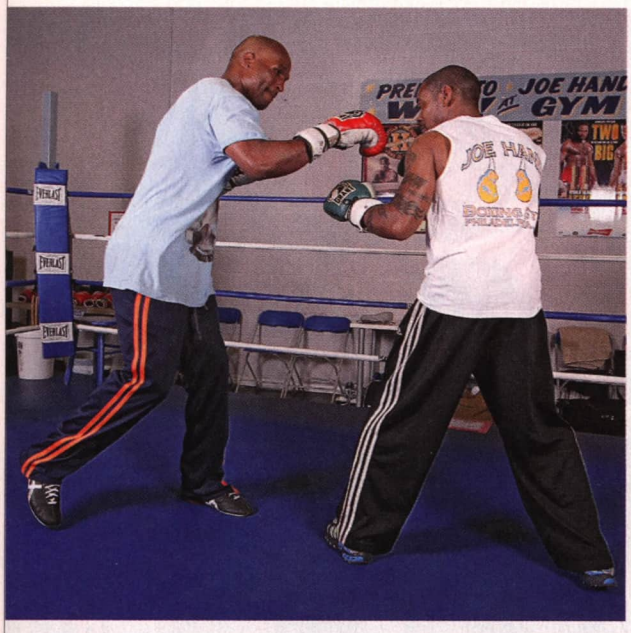
SET THE TRAP FOR THE INSIDE LEFT HOOK

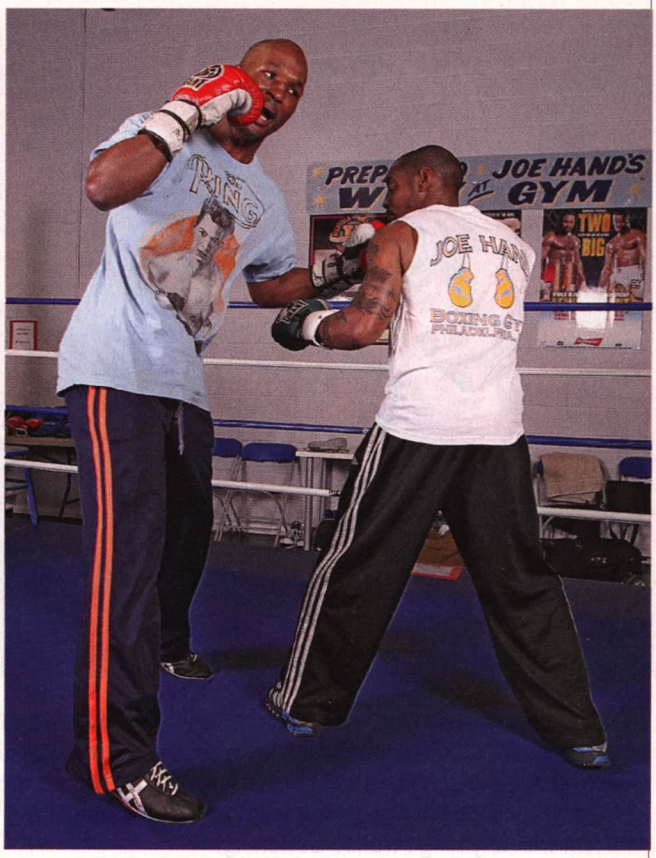


KEEP YOUR BACK FOOT IN WHAT WE CALL THE GRASSHOPPER POSITION so you can get a little hop. Then, from the outside, start a long right hand aimed at your man's head. But don't try to land it. Throw it to fall short because you don't want to land it. The right hand is a measuring stick. This right hand tells me how far away I am and how close I have to come. The right hand is a decoy. He never sees the left hand coming. The right is not meant to land. I place the right there, and he freezes.

WORK TOWARD THE ANGLE AND DRIVE WITH YOUR LEGS

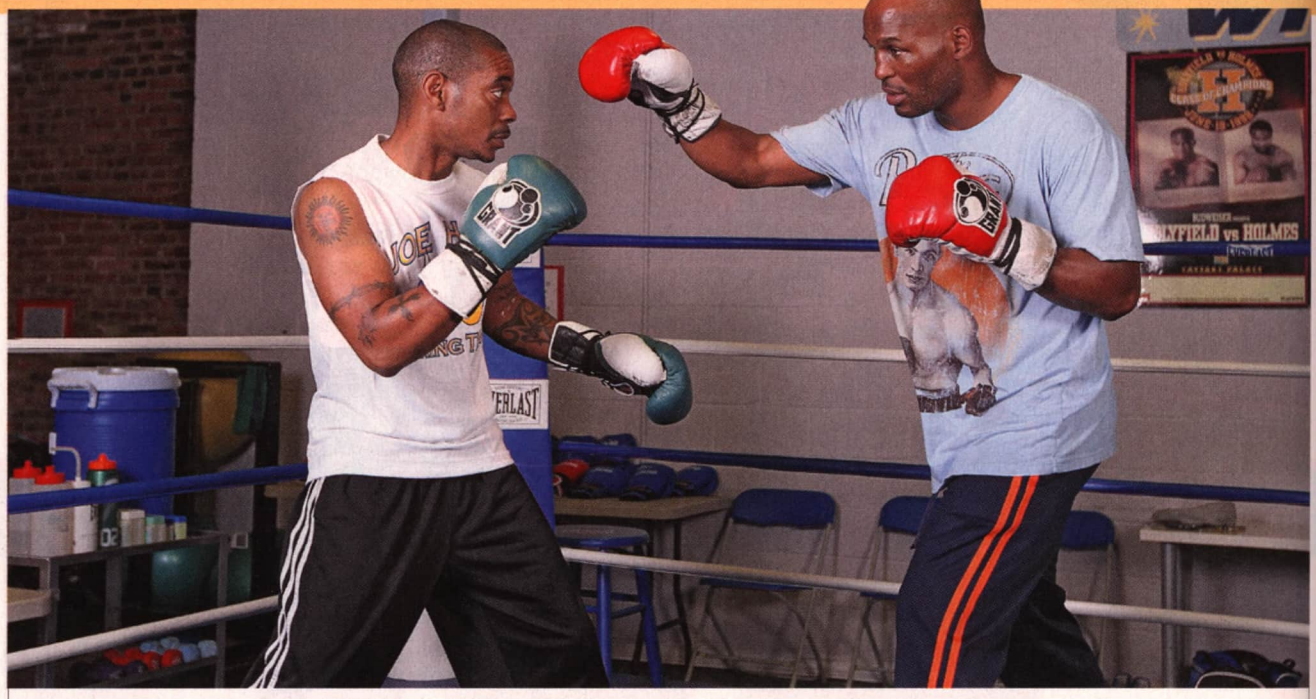


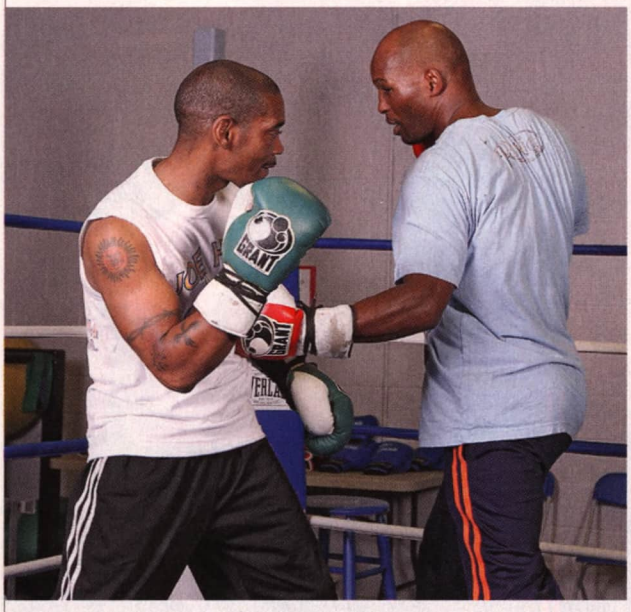


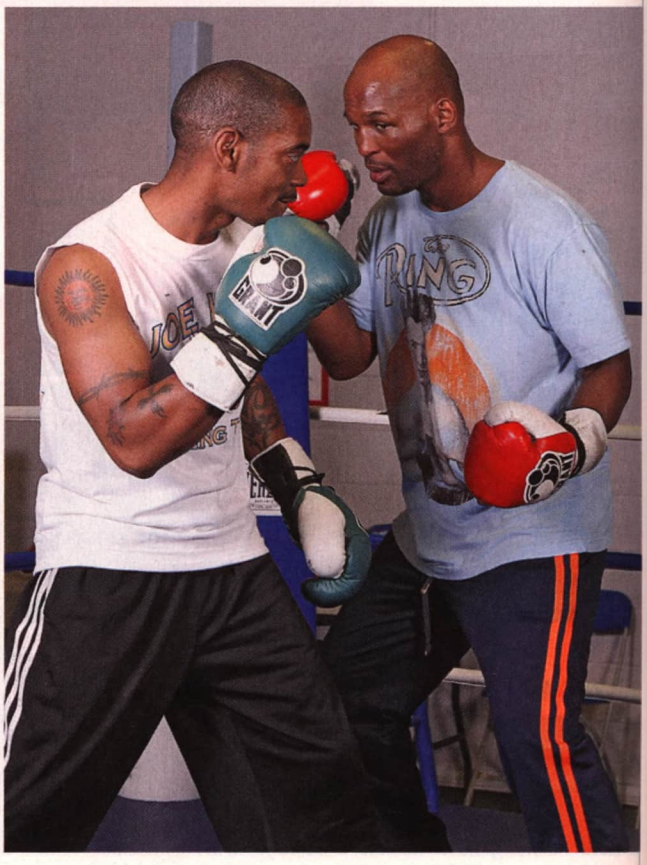


HERE'S A FULL VIEW OF THAT SAME MOVE AGAIN. See the distance I start at. See the right hand that falls short and how I step in with the left hook almost to a southpaw stance, bringing that back leg over and driving the punch. That hook is the punch I wanted to land, not the right hand. The right hand was a decoy.

SAME MOVE BUT TO THE BODY

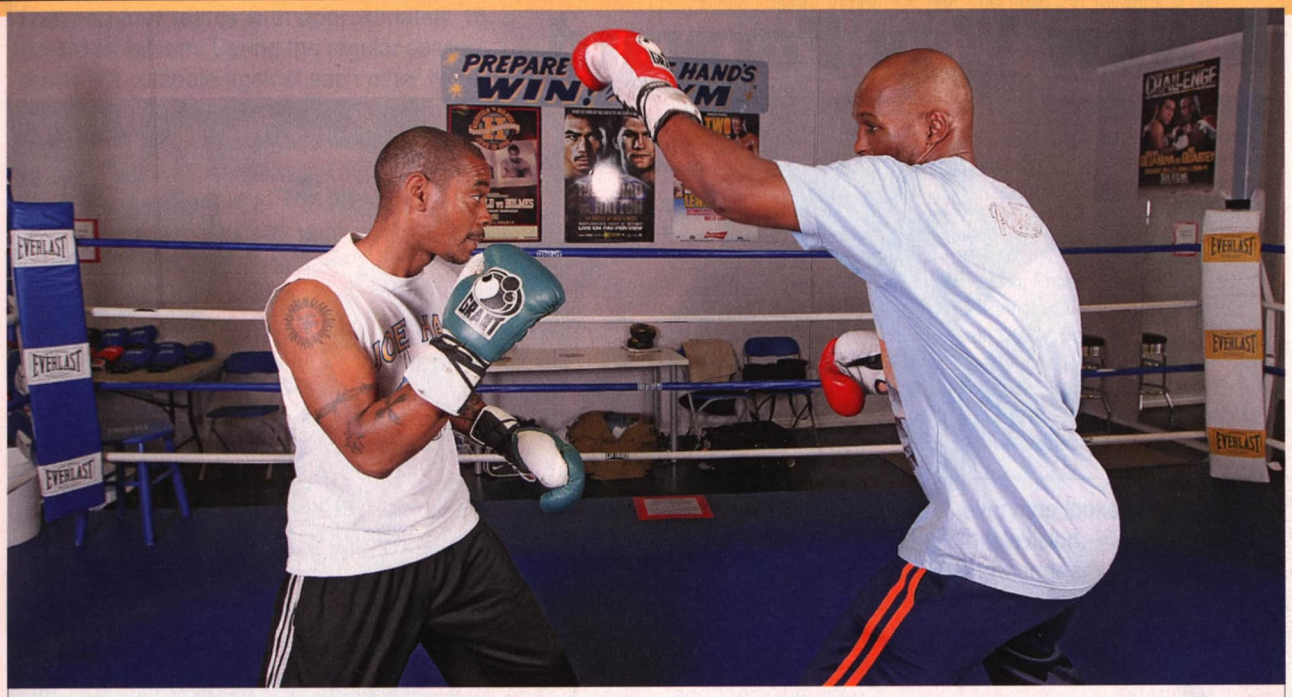


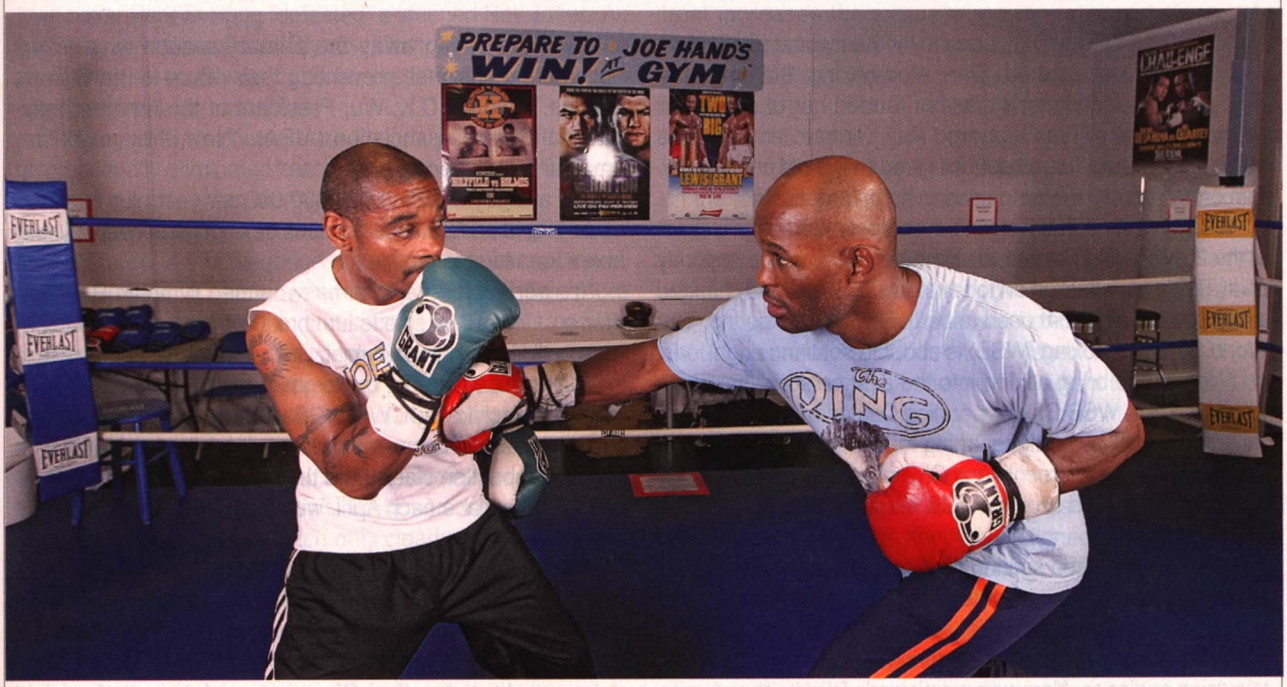




IT'S THE SAME MOVE HERE, BUT THIS TIME I'M DIGGING THAT UPPERCUT INTO DANNY'S BODY instead of bringing it up to the head. Show the right hand, step in and over, drive that hook, and then look at the angle I have—I can hit him with another hook. And because I'm behind him he can't hit me. He has to turn to get me, and, when he's doing that, I can hit him with anything I want. Positioning!

SET UP THE RIGHT TO THE BODY





WANT TO LAND A LONG RIGHT TO THE BODY? YOU CAN'T JUST WING IT FROM THE OUTSIDE AS A LEAD. He'll see it coming and counter you right down the middle. You've got to distract him, set a trap. How do you do that? With your left hand. Not a jab, just put it out there high. There has to be some way to distract the guy. That's the left hand. That's the stick. You need the left hand to set up anything off the bodyshot. That's the main thing in boxing. You need the left hand to set up anything. Show him this to give him that.

By Michael Rivest

A New Way Forward

Dr. Wu with amateur standouts Rau'shee Warren and Domenico Valentino

PHOTO COURTESY OF WORLD SERIES OF BOXING

"Whatever happened to the handsome one?" Mom once asked. She hated boxing. But long after Alzheimer's disease robbed her of cherished memories, she still remembered Ray Leonard and how the 1976 US Olympic Team kept her glued to the old console TV. Fan or not, amateur boxing used to be unforgettable.

Today, most people wouldn't even know there was a team at the 2008 Beijing Games, let alone be able to name anybody on it. That's no reflection on today's boxers. What has changed is the sport itself. What used to be thrilling is now boring. The World Series of Boxing (WSB) is about to set things right.

"We want to bring boxing into the 21st century," said Ivan Khodabakhsh, WSB Chief Operating Officer.

It will do that by partly returning to the exciting past. While major amateur tournaments and Olympic competition continue to use computerized scoring, WSB will go back to the 10-point must system.

"The computerized scoring system is a well-intentioned innovation designed to eliminate bias," Khodabakhsh said, but it robbed the sport of its thrills, so the WSB has jettisoned it. Also, headgear will come off, restoring the sport's appeal to a television audience. Now, when a viewer's favorite "handsome one" emerges, the WSB won't be concealing him behind a piece of protective equipment that many experts say hardly protects anyway.

Most importantly, WSB boxers will be paid in three-year contracts and still keep their amateur status.

"We'll be taking away the primary reason why boxers become professional, preventing their return to the Olympic Games," said Dr. C.K. Wu, President of the Amateur International Boxing Association (AIBA). "Now, they might stay amateur simply because they can."

Will a salary of $25,000 to $60,000 per year plus health insurance and performance bonuses be enough to keep a young boxer from turning pro?

"It's perfect for me," claims two-time Olympian Rau'shee Warren. "There'll be time to turn pro, but I can't close my trophy case until I bring home Olympic Gold. The World Series of Boxing makes it possible for me to get everything I want."

The brainchild of Dr. Wu, WSB will feature a regular season that begins each November and ends the following March. This year's competition started the third week in November. Playoffs will take place each April, with team and individual championships in May.

Pending approval from the International Olympic Committee, individual WSB champions will get automatic placement on Olympic Teams. This is apt to generate controversy, as they will get to skip the Olympic Trials and effectively close out competition to other Olympic hopefuls in their weight divisions.

Recognizing that marketing its new product will be critical to the WSB's success, AIBA owns only 75 percent of WSB. The rest has been wisely sold to IMG, the international sports marketing giant.

"We're after the casual fan that disappeared when boxing changed," said Eric Parthen, Managing Director of WSB Americas.

WSB is comprised of three world conferences—America, Europe, and Asia, each featuring four teams with approximately 16 boxers on a team. During the regular season, teams will compete against each other twice, once home and once away. The America Conference consists of franchises in Miami, Memphis, Los Angeles, and Mexico City.

WSB bouts will be five, three-minute rounds across five weight divisions: bantamweight (119 pounds), lightweight (134 pounds), middleweight (161 pounds), light heavyweight (187 pounds), and heavyweight (200 pounds).

In WSB, everything happens for a reason. Why five rounds?

"That's consistent with a casual fan's attention span," said Parthen.

And the five weight divisions? "The inflation of weight categories was hard for casual fans to relate to. It's been part of the problem," said Khodabakhsh.

Dropping the computerized scoring alone will do much to revive the sport. Introduced in the 1992 Barcelona Games, the electronic system came in response to corrupt judging that had always plagued international competition. But it reached an absurd level at the 1988 Games in Seoul, when hometown boxer Park Si Hung "defeated" a stunned Roy Jones. An embarrassed International Olympic Committee threatened to pull boxing as an Olympic sport unless AIBA could devise a way to address the corruption.

Although AIBA's computerized scoring eliminated bias, it unintentionally eliminated *real* boxing without the IOC's help. Five judges are given a keypad to register legally landed punches. In order for a blow to register in the computerized system, three of the five judges must score it. But each time a judge "clicks," it opens a one-second window. Two more judges have to "click" within that second for the scoring blow to count. Unless they're *really* fast clickers, the second goes by. Therefore, many actual punches are ignored.

And what about combination punching? Since they usually land within a second, how do judges click three times in a system that allows only one "hit" in one-second per punch windows? Answer: They don't. So boxers have learned to stand on the outside and pitch only clearly seen headshots, preferably one at a time. And since body shots aren't as easy to see by three judges, why bother with them? The bottom line is that combination punching, body punching, excitement, and the fans pretty much left around the same time.

Let's look at headgear: Its introduction in the 1980s made casual fans stop caring, and it utterly killed any television interest in the sport. It's one thing to watch good boxing, but to watch good and *handsome* boxers, that's something else. In the old days, seeing boxers' faces personalized the sport. You could get to know the boxers, pick a favorite, and even a nemesis. But with headgear, everyone looked the same. So casual fans lost interest, as did television.

Many neurologists question headgear's effectiveness in preventing injury in the first place.

"There's been no research on whether it works," argued Terry Smith, PhD, principle scientist at Dynamic Research, "and there's reason to think it may not. The extension in the front increases the torque when the forehead piece gets struck." Besides, it doesn't take Smith's PhD in Head Injury Biomechanics to know that headgear makes the head a bigger target and that most knockouts happen on the chin. Moreover, headgear gives boxers a false sense of safety, so punches that would easily be slipped are needlessly taken on the forehead. Also, remember that computerized scoring encourages headshots.

"Although no definitive studies have been done," added WWE's Chris Nowinski, author of *Head Games: Football's Concussion Crisis*, "there is no way boxing headgear absorbs enough to make it a black or white issue."

WSB believes that a better way to protect the boxers is not in the head, but in the gloves. "We're committed to providing the safest possible way for our athletes to compete," said Parthen. So, WSB believes they've found a way to both show boxers' faces and keep them safe, possibly even safer than with headgear. Through specially designed energy absorbing padding and unique glove stitching, WSB believes it has found the best of both worlds.

WSB doesn't only want *you* to watch amateur boxing; it wants your mother to watch it too—even if she thinks she hates it. WSB wants to bring amateur boxing back into everybody's living rooms in the 21st century, and it is doing it the right way, by learning what worked in the 20th—and what didn't. ■

Michael Rivest can be contacted at mrivest2@gmail.com.

2010 National Police Athletic League Tournament Results

(October 4 through October 9, 2010)

Open Male Division

108 pounds: Louie Byrd, Denver, CO, dec. Marco Rangel, Scottsdale, AZ
114 pounds: Rau'shee Warren, Cincinnati, OH, dec. Adam Lopez, San Antonio, TX
123 pounds: O'Shanique Foster, Orange, TX, dec. Luis Feliciano, Milwaukee, WI
132 pounds: Kenneth Simms, Chicago, IL, dec. Luis Cruz, Bronx, NY
141 pounds: Pedro Sosa, Bronx, NY, dec. Amir Iman, Albany, NY
152 pounds: Errol Spence, Desoto, TX, dec. Antoine Douglas, Burke, VA
165 pounds: D'Mitrius Ballard, Temple Hills, MD, dec. Kenneth McNeil, Birmingham, AL
178 pounds: Marcus Browne, Staten Island, NY, dec. Jerry Odom, Bowie, MD
201 pounds: Steve Geffrard, Boca Raton, FL, dec. Robert Jekabson, Chicago, IL
201+ pounds: Lenroy Thompson, Lenexa, KS, dec. Roberto Morban, Bronx, NY

Open Female Division

106 pounds: Jessica Ponce, Napa, CA, won on walkover
112 pounds: Christina Cruz, NY, NY, dec. Cynthia Moreno, Phoenix, AZ
119 pounds: Nephateria Miller, New Haven, CT, dec. Patricia Cuevas, San Antonio, TX
125 pounds: LaTonya King, Detroit, MI, dec. Elizabeth Leddy, Portland, OR
132 pounds: Stephanie Han, El Paso, TX, dec. Mikaela Mayer, West Hills, CA
141 pounds: Brittany Inkrote, Red Lion, PA, dec. Jenna Johlin, Mayfield Heights, OH
152 pounds: Tiffanie Ward, Hacienda Heights, CA, dec. Nisa Rodriguez, Bronx, NY
178+ pounds: Denise Rico, Los Angeles, CA, dec. Tameka Stephens, Houston, TX

By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

A Step In The Right Direction

Former WBC welterweight and junior middleweight titleholder Wilfred Benitez lives in Puerto Rico suffering from severe post-traumatic encephalopathy (cognitive decline). According to a recent FanHouse article by Jim Henry, the 52-year-old Benitez is unable to recognize family and friends. His degenerative brain disease is the result of repeated head blows and is equivalent to the punch-drunk syndrome.

While there is no cure for Benitez, who retired from boxing in 1990 after 62 pro bouts, a newly proposed investigative study may one day save boxers from a similar fate.

The Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health opened in Las Vegas in 2009. They are currently in the planning phase of a study that will follow both boxers and MMA athletes through detailed neurological testing.

Benitez shows his mother, Clara, his International Boxing Hall of Fame ring in 1996

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

The Clinic's Associate Director, Dr. Charles Bernick, a Las Vegas neurologist since 1994, formulated the idea in an effort to determine how early results to the brain eventually affect long-term functioning.

"We have the resources to do imaging (brain MRI), neuropsychological testing, and neurologic examinations to follow the athletes longitudinally—over time," said Bernick. "Nevada provides a cohort [study group] that no one else has. We will be able to determine changes in brain volume and other imaging markers [findings] that detect changes and correlate with a fighter's exam."

Dr. Bernick hopes to identify specific biomarkers—substances that may indicate the risk or progression of brain degeneration. He notes, "These biomarkers could be used by a regulatory agency to identify those individuals going downhill. Perhaps these test results can be predictive or indicate physiologic damage in the brain."

The proposed study will soon be presented to an institutional review board (IRB). This committee is designated to approve, monitor, and review research involving human subjects.

Bernick went before the Nevada State Athletic Commission during their October 5 meeting and received overwhelming support. Involvement will be voluntary, and none of the results will be released to the commission, unless requested by the fighter. At the Ruvo Center, a boxer who typically pays for an MRI study may undergo testing for free and ask that his results be submitted as part of his licensing requirements.

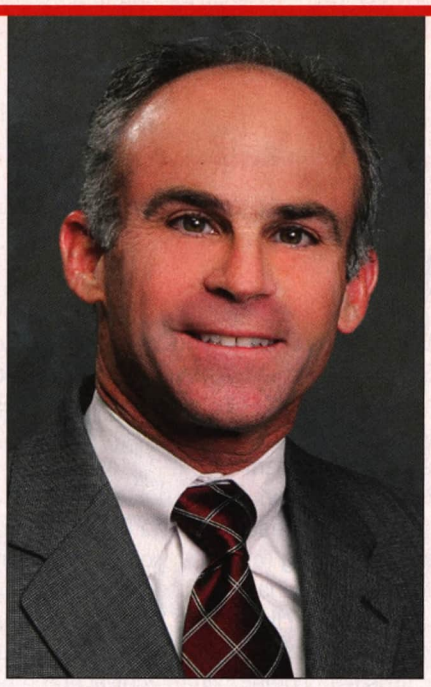
The Ruvo Center is planning a three-year pilot program, after which they could utilize preliminary data to obtain approval from an organization such as the National Institute of Health. Hopefully, yearly follow-ups will continue over a lengthier time of period.

Along with free testing, the researchers are looking to include a gait analysis system for balance and walking in addition to speech. This latter data will be invaluable in early detection. Perhaps such an evaluation could have prevented the decline of boxers such as Benitez and Muhammad Ali.

Commissions will not have automatic access to the information other than a summary of fighter participation, and the clinic can accept out of state fighters.

As few boxers have health insurance and/or private physicians, the question will be as to how the Ruvo Center will handle abnormalities. "The fighter and their physician [if they have one] will be notified," said Bernick.

I recommend the Ruvo Center enlist oversight from independent medical boxing experts regarding diagnoses that would prohibit an athlete from competing. If a brain scan were to show an aneurysm, hemorrhage, tumor, or significant brain shrinkage, a commission must be informed so a fighter does not slip through the cracks and travel to less vigilant jurisdictions.



Dr. Bernick: Heads new brain study

Prominent Las Vegas promoters, including Golden Boy Promotions, Top Rank, and the Ultimate Fighting Championships have been contacted and will hopefully aid in funneling their fighters to the clinic and help with long-term funding, if needed.

All too often, fans recognize when a boxer has absorbed too much punishment and is demonstrating decline in his performance before a commission takes action. Dr. Bernick and the Lou Ruvo Center may find a way to prevent the fate that has befallen so many athletes.

Possible Misstep

Also at the October 5 meeting, the NSAC made amendments to their drug testing policies. I hoped the commission would add unannounced, between-competition urine and blood tests, but they opted against real improvement and may have worsened the situation.

Once every calendar year, Nevada fighters submit blood results for HIV and hepatitis. Now, in addition to an examination for infectious disease, they will undergo a complete blood count (CBC).

The NSAC rationalized that a planned CBC on file could be used to document blood doping if there is a significant change in the number of red blood cells on a subsequent study.

This is a waste of time and blood. Who is to say that the submitted specimen is not from a boxer already blood doping? How can the commission be certain that a blood count change from year to year is not from reasons other than blood doping, such as anemia or living at high altitude?

A blood count alone is rudimentary and insufficient to prove blood doping. In fact, anti-doping scientists for the last Tour de France added a blood-doping exam that detects a chemical called a plasticizer, which is found in blood storage bags and leaks into blood. Any individual positive for plasticizer would prove the athlete had undergone a blood transfusion.

The NSAC also decided on a use-form for testosterone. Those fighters submitting the form will be tested for anabolic steroids.

It is highly unlikely that a young healthy athlete would have a low testosterone level. In fact, a juicing boxer may register a low testosterone level as they come off the drug.

Many substances, including testosterone, can be out of a boxer's system within hours. Giving the fighter advance notice of a steroid test is like launching a flare.

I would have required any fighter submitting an exemption for testosterone use, see an independent doctor, preferably an endocrinologist [hormone specialist] to determine the validity of the drug's use.

In response to the commission's amendments, US Anti-Doping Agency President Travis Tygart noted, "I have not seen the policy changes, but, if the changes are what is written in the articles, then they have done a great job in educating on all the ways to cheat and nothing for actually solving the problem and ensuring the integrity of any matches."

The NSAC needs to concentrate on other safety issues and turn PED testing over to the experts at the USADA. ■

PHOTO BY CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

USADA's Tygart testifies at Congressional hearing

By Jim Bagg

Mailing It In

Probably the number-one item on the Baggajawea's pet-peeve list, aside from the fact that Glenn Beck hasn't yet been exiled to some third-world nation without television cameras, is people who refer to boxing as a "dead sport" or a "dying sport." Just because it isn't a mainstream sport, that doesn't mean it lacks a pulse. You want the complete list of mainstream sports in the United States these days? It goes football, baseball, basketball, auto racing (at least below the Mason-Dixon line—which, for the record, has nothing to do with Antonio Tarver), and maybe golf (we'll find out for sure whether it really qualifies should Tiger Woods fail to get his mojo back). If boxing is dead, then so is every other sport that didn't make that list. Ice hockey: dead. Soccer: dead. Tennis: dead. Even mixed martial arts: dead. In the US of A, they're all popular cult sports, just like boxing.

All that being said … for a few weeks in September and October, boxing sure did feel like a dead sport, didn't it? Jeez, the Baggalicious hasn't seen this little action since Week Two of his second marriage. (And every week of his life since.) Nothing on HBO, nothing on Showtime, nothing on ESPN or ESPN2. Just some minor-league boxing on Spanish-language networks and some overseas stuff broadcast on a signal that can be received only by hooking tin foil up to the neighborhood pimple-face's dental retainer.

So what does a boxing columnist do when there's no boxing to write about? He lets his readers write his column for him. The ol' mailbagg has gotten sufficiently stuffed the last few weeks, so instead of just one or two reader e-mails buried in a sidebar, we'll go with an expanded version of the Monthly Mailbagg. As always, these are actual letters from actual readers, though the Baggomatic will let you decide for yourself whether any of them have actual brains.

Dead sport? Nah. Brain-dead fans? Lurking around every corner.

Bagg-o-junk,

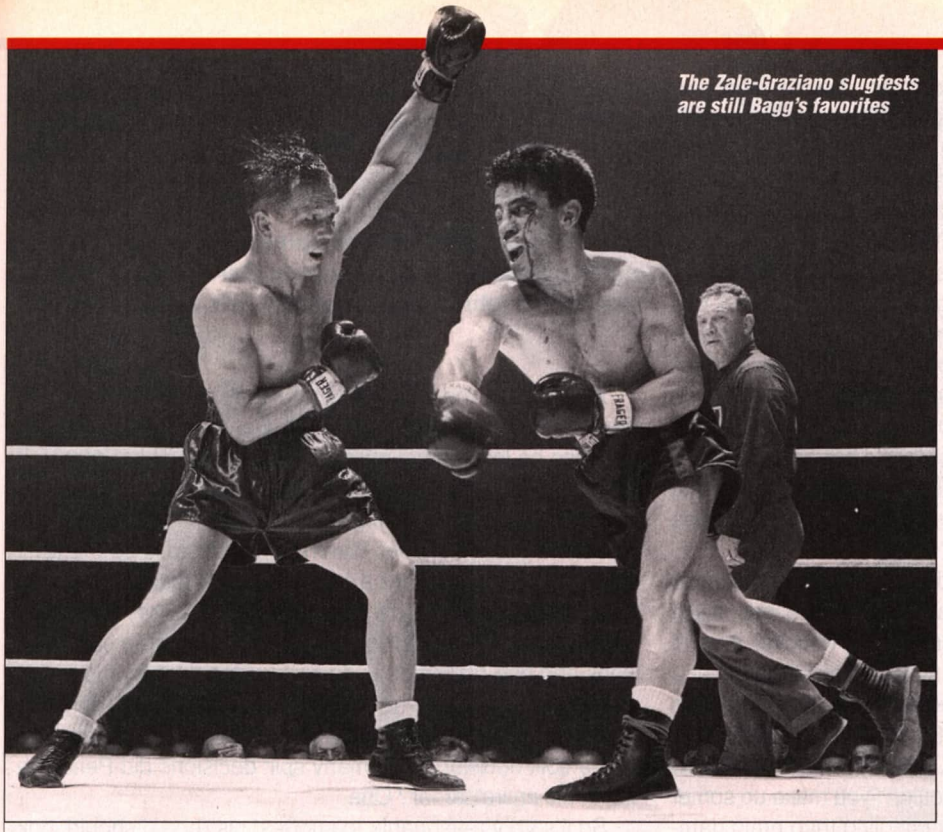
Why don't you get off your hi horse and stop trying to be the Simon Cowell of boxing. You're just a jealous old loser who badmouths everybody who's successful and makes more money than you do, like Floyd Mayweather and the Klitschkos. You complain about Arthur Mercante needing attention, but maybe you should look in the mirror on that one. I bet you've never boxed a round in your life. If you ever got in the ring, you'd have more respect for these athletes.

Craig Robbins
Fresno, CA

The Baggmeister couldn't resist leading off the mailbagg with your moron manifesto. First of all, it is "high horse." The cliché isn't about a guy saying hello to Mr. Ed. Also, it may be true that Mayweather and the Klitschkos are successful, and, yes, their spit-bucket carriers probably make more money than your average boxing writer. But Wlad, Vitali, and Floyd get badmouthed in this column space because of the way they fight (about as fun as watching paint that's already dry sit on a wall and do nothing) and, in Mayweather's case, the way they behave. The second the Baggarooney stops criticizing fighters (and referees, promoters, broadcasters, etc.) who deserve criticism, THE RING ceases to be a magazine and turns into a public relations newsletter that no boxing fan would want to read.

Wladimir and Vitali pose with their (we kid you not) Bambi Awards

PHOTO BY FLORIAN SEEFRIED/GETTY IMAGES



The Zale-Graziano slugfests are still Bagg's favorites

And did you really bust out the old "you've never boxed a round in your life" crutch? Who do you think you are, James Toney? Here's the problem with that stance: There wouldn't be many informative, entertaining, well-written boxing articles out there if every journalist on the scene was an ex-fighter. The world witnessed how little Lennox Lewis had to say while he was under the employ of HBO. Do we really want him trying his hand at writing?

You don't have to have been a boxer to be capable of analyzing boxing. But just so you know, the Vi-Bagg-ra actually did box a bit in his day. The problem was he wasn't very mobile, took a lot of punches, and didn't have the discipline to make weight. How do you think the "heavy bagg" got its name?

Baggy Baggcquiao,

1. Who is your favorite fighter of all-time?

2. What was the best fight you ever saw?

Bernardo

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a winner for least creative e-mail of 2010! Bernardo, did you really just spend the energy typing an e-mail and pressing "send" so that you could ask the Baggasaurus to name his favorite fighter and favorite fight? While you're at it, why not ask him his favorite color, favorite flavor of soup, and favorite episode of *Mork & Mindy*?

Really, there's only one reason your e-mail has made the cut: because you called the world's greatest boxing writer "Baggy Baggcquiao," which is the first time a reader ever came up with a quality Bagg nickname. And because you did that, Baggy B. will go ahead and answer your monumentally unimaginative questions:

1. We all tend to form our strongest opinions during our childhood years, so it should be no surprise that the Baggnoplasty's all-time favorite fighter is James Figg.

2. Which side of the bed the Baggman gets up on goes a long way here. If he gets up on the left side of the bed, it's Tony Zale KO 6 Rocky Graziano. If he gets up on the right side, it's Rocky Graziano KO 6 Tony Zale.

Baggsparagus,

I gotta go straight to the man who pulls no punches with this question: Are you suspicious of the injuries, delays, and withdrawals that have plagued the Super Six? Something just doesn't smell right about Kessler's eye injury, and something smells downright awful, like your barf-stained couch, about Dirrell's neurological problems. Doesn't this seem like easy stuff to fake, the kind of injuries you can't really prove don't exist? I'm not buying it. I think Dirrell didn't want to lose to Ward and Kessler knows he's lost a couple steps and wants to escape the tournament on a winning note. What do you think?

Michael Blaustein

Let's address the most important subject first: the Baggstreet Boy's barf-stained couch. Did you know you could only flip the cushion over once before that technique is rendered ineffective? That's why the Baggermelon's sofa is currently covered in old flannel shirts.

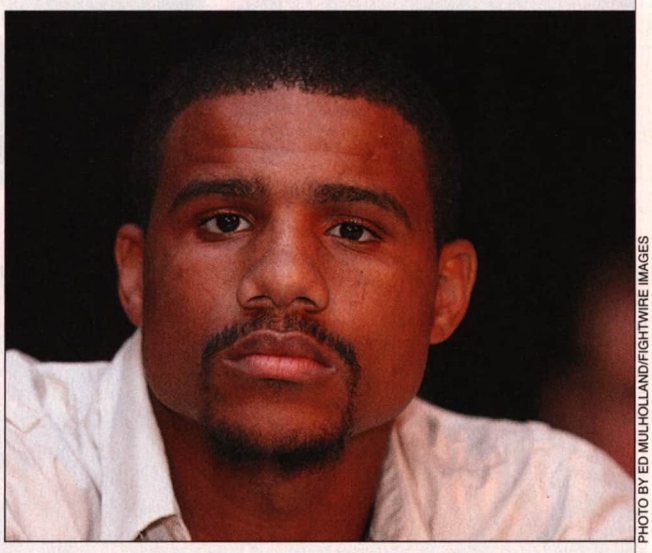


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

It would make no sense for Dirrell or any boxer to fake a head injury

As for the "Super Six," your conspiracy theories seem 50 percent warranted. The Baggopoly has the same suspicions about Kessler. If you have vision problems and you're not sure how long it will take you to recover so you need to pull out of the tournament, how can you then say your plan is to fight the winner of the Super Six immediately after the tournament ends? How can you put a timeline on this eye injury you've supposedly been plagued by for your last two fights? Kessler just ain't the same fighter he was three or four years ago. He was convinced of that in his loss to Ward and even his win over Carl Froch, and the last thing he wanted was a couple more tough fights back to back. If he never fights again, then the Baggarooski will eat his words. But until that comes to pass, Mikkel, if you're experiencing double vision, then you must see the Baggnacious holding up four middle fingers.

With Dirrell, on the other hand, the Baggracadabra's ample gut is telling him these neurological difficulties are legit. It just seems his people handled it poorly, trying to cover it up in hopes that "The Matrix" (overrated movie, cool nickname for a fighter) would get better. All of their bungling of the situation made his pullout look fishier than the sushi rolls Manny Pacquiao makes for Floyd Mayweather, but ask yourself this: If you were going to make up an injury, wouldn't you make up something a little less potentially career crippling than brain damage? For the rest of his career (assuming it resumes), Dirrell is going to have to undergo extra MRIs from any responsible commission. So to all those who think he's perfectly fine and just didn't want to fight his friend, you could probably use an MRI also.

Greetings from the Philippines, Mr. Bagg! I have a question about the great warrior Gerry Penalosa. Now that he has retired, do you believe he's a Hall of Famer?
Gregorio Adlau

Penalosa is the saddest kind of Hall of Fame candidate there is: the kind who probably won't get in, and it's mostly just because he lost almost every close decision of his career. If we're to believe he's retired (which he might be, but to say so with certainty is like trusting Johnny Tapia when he tells you he's done getting tattoos), then his final record is 55-8-2 (37). His loss to Eric Morel was a joke. His loss to Daniel Ponce De Leon was at least highly questionable. Against Masamori Tokuyama and In Joo Cho, he went 0-4 with three split decisions and one razor-close unanimous decision. By the law of averages, Penalosa should have been no worse than 1-3, maybe even 2-2, in those fights. Even his one early-career loss was a split decision. How many split decisions did Penalosa win in his entire career? One.

So it's very reasonable to suggest his record should look more like 59-4-2 (37) with an extra alphabet reign or two. If that

Penalosa on the attack against Jhonny Gonzalez

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

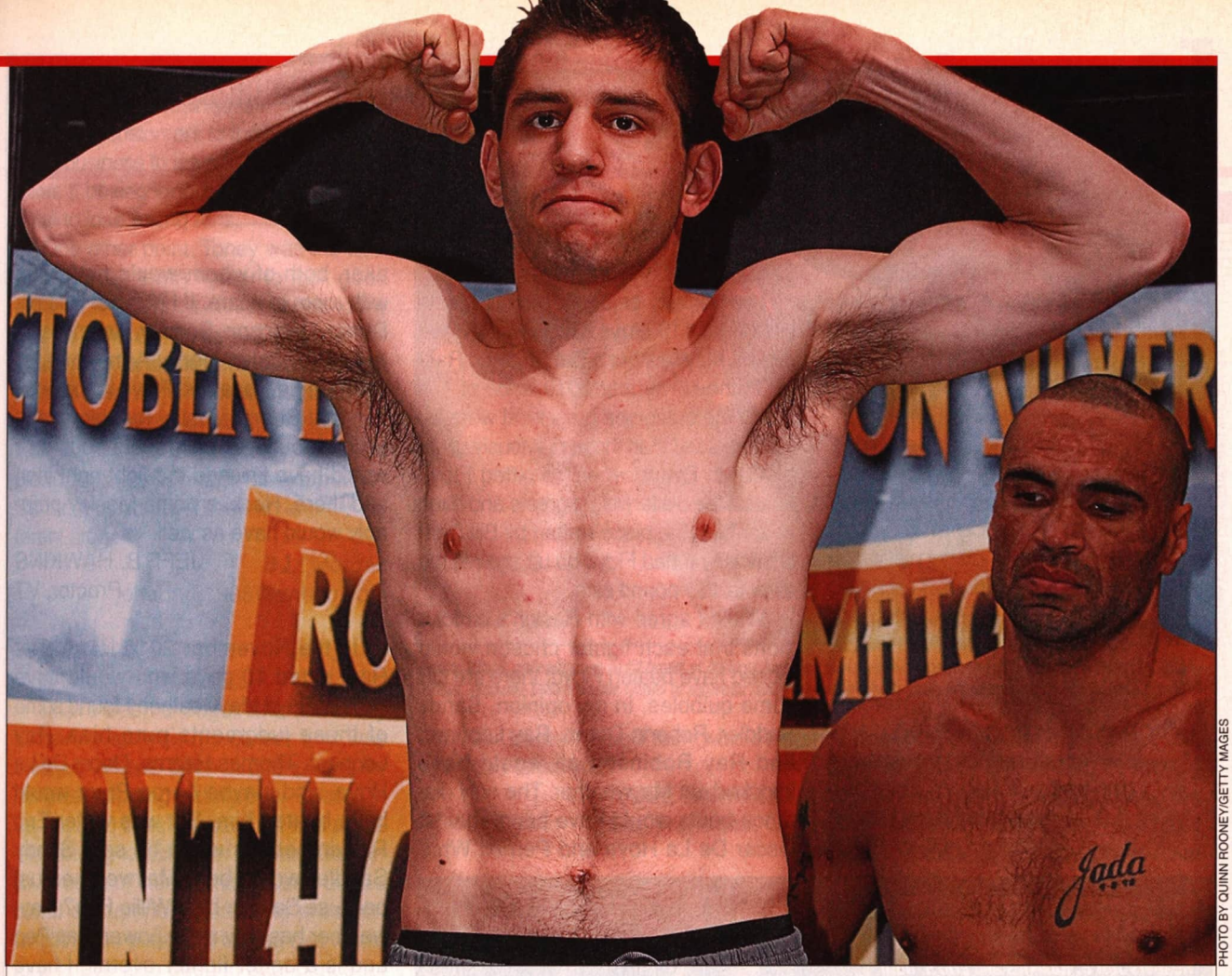


PHOTO BY QUINN ROONEY/GETTY MAGES

Stingray winner: Alejandro Gustavo Falliga

were the case, he'd probably get the votes he needs to make the Hall eventually. Instead, if he wants in, he needs to start going by his birth name: Geronimo Penalosa. Yes, Gerry really is short for Geronimo. How bleepin' cool is that name? You telling Baggces With Wolves that you could resist voting for a dude named Geronimo Penalosa?

I would like to say why I think boxing is a dying sport. It's because some boxers say they're great or the baddest of the bad, then make excuses and don't fight the best. I say they're gutless chicken s___s. And yes, I'm talking about the biggest chicken s___, Floyd Mayweather. He'll fight his ex-girlfriend any time, to prove his worth!

Tony Sanchez

And we end where we began, with the "dying sport" baloney. But you're right; Mayweather talks a big game, then chooses not to back it up. As for the ex-girlfriend crack, the Baggtacular can't condone your statement. Mayweather is innocent until proven guilty. You need to at least cover yourself with the word "allegedly."

Oh, and don't disrespect his baby momma by calling her a mere ex-girlfriend.

And The Stingray Goes To ...

Alejandro Gustavo Falliga, who won a battle of three-named Argentines in late-September by knocking out Ulises David Lopez in the third round of what looked on paper like a mismatch in the other direction. Lopez was 26-1 (15) coming in. Falliga was 17-7-4 (7). Just one problem: Lopez had a record built against mail carriers and short-order cooks, whereas Falliga's record got dinged up by world-class fighters such as Anthony Mundine, Sebastian Zbik, and Andy Lee. Put him in with a good fighter with a good record, and he fails. Put him in with a mediocre fighter with a good record, and Stingrays happen.

The action was back and forth the first two rounds, but it seemed clear Falliga's punches were a little bit more effective than Lopez'. And in the third, a right uppercut dropped Lopez hard. Lopez sat on one knee, smiled at his opponent, and indicated it was a good shot—but kind of forgot about needing to stand up before the count of 10. Maybe he was more out of it than he looked. Maybe he just didn't want any more. Either way, he made a fine fall guy for Falliga.

There's an art to building up a record in the fight game. You have to know which guys to avoid. Falliga is one of those guys, and he now has the Stingray to prove it. ■

Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.

[Come Out Writing]

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 114, Blue Bell, PA 19422.

Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

Difference Of Opinion

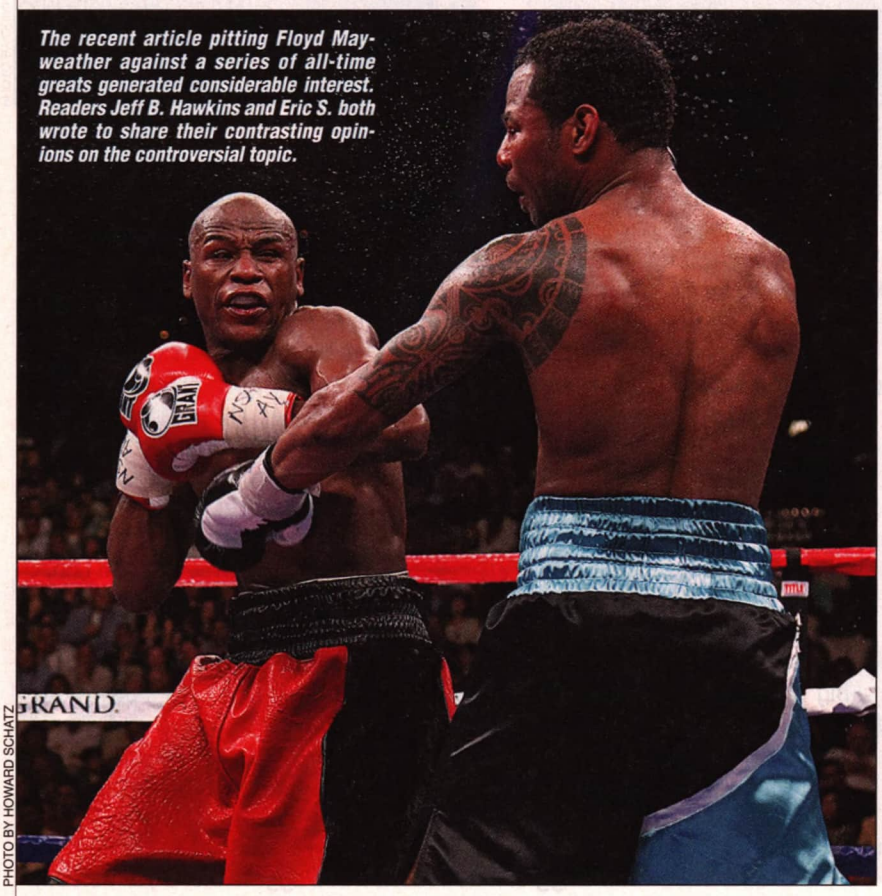
I immensely enjoyed "Money Meets His Match: 10 Guys Who Would Have Kicked Mayweather's Butt" by Eric Raskin in the November 2010 issue of THE RING. The outcomes presented were far more realistic than those previously given by Gavin Evans when he pitted Floyd against the welterweight greats and even better than the piece written by Bill Dettloff when he had Floyd go up against the all-time 135-pound elite.

While I agree with Raskin's conclusions that each fighter chosen would indeed have beaten Floyd, there are still some quibbles. In my opinion, Sandy Saddler, Roberto Duran, Ray Leonard, and Ray Robinson all would have knocked out Mayweather. The only distance bouts would have been against Oscar De La Hoya and Pernell Whitaker, both of whom would have won with room to spare. If Leonard, Hearns, Duran, Robinson, Saddler, Aaron Pryor, Alexis Arguello, Henry Armstrong, or even De La Hoya had Floyd in the position that Shane Mosley had him in the second round of their recent bout, they would have finished the fight right then and there. Heck, a prime Mosley probably would have as well.

JEFF B. HAWKINS
Proctor, VT

In the November 2010 issue, THE RING pitted 10 guys who would have beaten Floyd Mayweather. I found some of these judgments pure bias. Ray Leonard, Thomas Hearns, Oscar De La Hoya, and maybe Aaron Pryor would have beaten him. But was writer Eric Raskin serious when he said Sandy Saddler would beat Mayweather just because Saddler beat Willie Pep? Mayweather has way more power than Pep and is a better fighter overall. I have much respect for Ray Robinson, but he struggled with Randy Turpin and Kid Gavilan, so how good would he have done against Mayweather? Probably not as good as you guys think, though he probably would have won. Bouts between Mayweather and Roberto Duran and Pernell Whitaker would be toss-ups, although I think Duran might get frustrated and lose a decision. Anyway, quit underrating Mayweather.

ERIC S.
Sacramento, CA



The recent article pitting Floyd Mayweather against a series of all-time greats generated considerable interest. Readers Jeff B. Hawkins and Eric S. both wrote to share their contrasting opinions on the controversial topic.

PHOTO BY HOWARD SCHATZ

Learn From The Competition

Thanks for Don Stradley's article "Caged Humiliation" about James Toney's beat down by Randy Couture. About a week before I received the December 2010 issue, which contained the article, I posted a piece on the Internet that outlined some things boxing could learn from MMA. I got roasted by boxing fans who just don't understand

that sports are businesses that depend on paying customers to thrive. It is simply good business to learn from your competition. If boxing ignores MMA, it will continue to lose young fans.

One other point: Toney was the best boxer for an MMA fighter to look good against. At this point in his career, Toney has no hand or foot speed. Dana White couldn't have picked a better opponent to make his UFC representative look incredible. With a quick fighter such as Amir Khan, Timothy Bradley, or Andre Berto as the opponent for a top MMA fighter, it could have been an entirely different story.

B.L. Morgan
johndark1985@yahoo.com

Thanks For The Memories

I have been a Sugar Shane Mosley fan since early in his career and was blessed to have been in attendance for his awe-inspiring victory over Oscar De La Hoya (in their first bout) as well as his devastating knockout of Antonio Margarito. In each of these fights, Mosley used a blend of superior speed and precision combination punching to lead him to victory. I have also been in attendance for Mosley's two most recent fights. Other than the couple of right hands he landed against Floyd Mayweather, Mosley just didn't seem to have the speed to make the bout competitive. Still, Shane did go the distance against one of the top boxers in the world and did nothing to tarnish his legacy. However, Mosley's bout with Sergio Mora showed just how much he has slipped. Once again, Mosley rarely landed anything with authority or in combination and always seemed to be a step too slow. I don't want to take anything away from what Mora accomplished that night, but Mosley would have knocked out a fighter of Mora's level a few years ago.

Shane, you've always been a class act and a real fighter. You never dodged anyone and you reached the pinnacle in your sport. Please consider walking away before it is too late and you become nothing more than a name opponent. You've done enough, and your legacy is secure. Thanks for all the memories you've provided your many fans throughout your career. Good luck wherever your road takes you.

JUDE FARRELLY
San Francisco, CA

PHOTO BY ALEXIS CUAREZMA/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Andre Ward unleashes a right hand at Mikkel Kessler during their November 2009 bout in Oakland, California. Reader Steve Bauer wrote to express how impressed he is with Ward as both a fighter and a man.

Great Role Model

Kudos to Joseph Santoliquito for his very engaging profile of Andre Ward ("The Ring Interview," November 2010 issue), which gave us an up close and personal look at Andre the fighter and Andre the man. I have been tremendously impressed with the way Ward conducts himself inside and outside the ring ever since he won gold at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. Whether professional athletes like it or not, fans and kids do look up to them as role models. Andre not only sets a great example for others to follow, he is a great promoter of our sport. It is refreshing to see a champion who is so humble, dedicated, relentless in the pursuit of perfection, grounded in his family and faith, and respectful of all his fans and opponents.

STEVE BAUER
Downingtown, PA

Time To Go

I was disgusted to read that Bernard Hopkins was going to be the next opponent for newly crowned Ring light heavyweight champion Jean Pascal. It's bad enough that we had to sit through the Hopkins-Roy Jones rematch farce, especially as Danny Green had destroyed Jones in Roy's previous fight. One of the many things that hurt our sport is a great fighter not knowing when it's time to retire gracefully. Bernard and Roy, I will always cherish your great ring battles, but that doesn't mean I want to continue watching you guys fight on past your primes, especially if it means you're taking valuable television dates away from up-and-coming young fighters.

ANTHONY MEDINA
San Leandro, CA

Cleverly Coming On Strong

I wanted to say how good it was to see the UK so well represented in the "All-Star Report Card" in the October 2010 issue, but I've got to take issue with the comments about Carl Froch. Mr. Froch may have a bent nose, but to suggest that all our hooligans are in the pub is ridiculous—most of them are in the football (soccer) stadiums moaning about how we got shafted in South Africa. Next year, I'm expecting to see another Brit burst into the All-Star pack: Nathan Cleverly, another raging dragon from the valleys to follow Joe Calzaghe as the fighting pride of Wales.

IAN CAWLEY
Stoke on Trent, UK ■

By Don Stradley

Kirkland Ready To Resume Career

December marks the return to action of a pair of boxing's tough guys, **Tavoris Cloud** and **James Kirkland**.

IBF light heavyweight titlist Cloud won his last bout, a competitive 12-round decision over gentleman warhorse **Glen Johnson** last August. Cloud is scheduled to make the second defense of his belt on a Don King promoted show tentatively set for December 17 at Miami's American Airlines Arena. This would be the first of a series of shows proposed by King for the venue, and would be the cofeature along with a heavyweight bout between Cuban gold medalist **Odlanier Solis** and **Ray Austin**. Cloud will be making his first title defense in front of his home state Florida fans.

Cloud's challenger is **Fulgencio Zuniga**, 24-4-4 (21), who is moving up from super middleweight. "I'm not familiar with Zuniga, but my prediction is we gonna win the fight," Cloud told ESPN.com.

Kirkland's return is a bit more dramatic.

Kirkland will be resuming his boxing career after an 18-month stint in Bastrop Federal Prison. He was arrested in 2009 for possession of a firearm, but a previous conviction meant Kirkland's penalty was stiffer than the usual. He had originally been sentenced to two years.

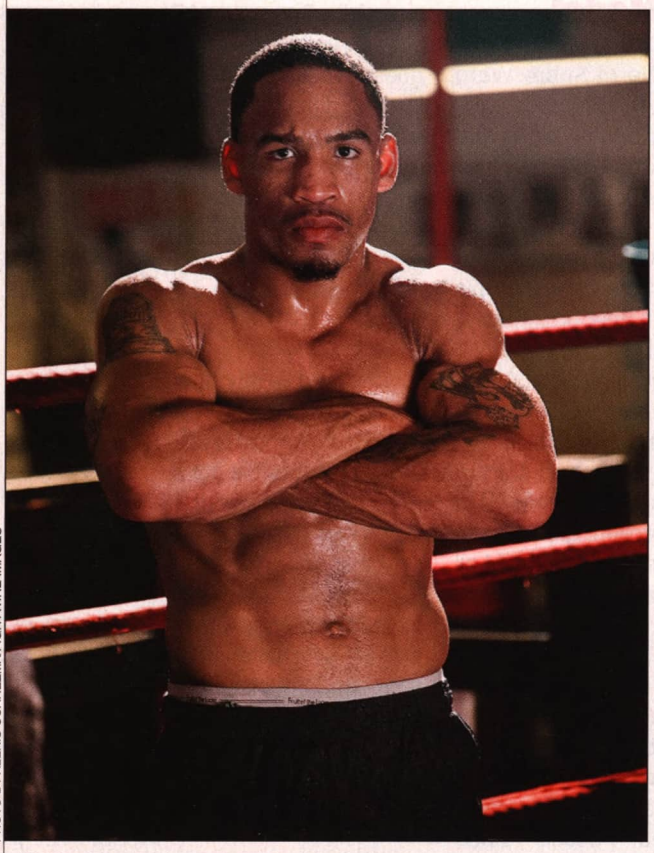


PHOTO BY ALEXIS CUAREZMA/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Kirkland is out of prison and back in the ring

Golden Boy Promotions plans to put Kirkland on the undercard of the **Amir Khan-Marcos Maidana** event at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas. Journeyman **Delray Raynes** has been penciled in as Kirkland's first comeback opponent.

The last time we saw Kirkland in a boxing ring was when he stopped **Joel Julio** in March 2009 on HBO. Kirkland's bruising style was making him a favorite of beat writers, but his ring efforts were sometimes overshadowed by his criminal past. Kirkland turned pro in 2001, but was busted in 2003 for armed robbery and spent more than two years behind bars. The recent prison term was the second time his career had been stalled.

Kirkland and trainer **Ann Wolfe** seemed to be a good pair, but, as of press time, the fighter and trainer were working out the details of their working relationship. Kirkland's arrest had been a great disappointment for Wolfe, who had been through hard times herself and had accepted Kirkland in an almost sisterly fashion. We're certainly hoping Kirkland straightens himself out, not only for his own well-being, but because the 154-pound division could use a heavy-handed slugger.

GBP isn't matching Kirkland hard for his return. Raynes has four knockout losses on his ledger, including two in his last four starts. Raynes won his last bout, though. It took place at a middle school in his hometown of Paris, Arkansas. He faced **David Molton**, an Arkansas neighbor with a 0-13 record who succumbed in two rounds. Kirkland will likely give Raynes a tougher night.

Listen Up

Tomasz Adamek continues in his quest to establish himself in the heavyweight class. The next test for him is rugged **Vinnie Maddalone**. They'll face off in Adamek's Newark, New Jersey, turf on December 9 on a pay-per-view show from the Prudential Center. Maddalone's 33-6 (24) record may not sparkle, but he's as game as any 33-6 heavyweight you can name … Two nights later, **Wladimir Klitschko**, THE RING's heavyweight champ, will face **Derek Chisora** in Mannheim, Germany. Chisora has had only 14 pro fights, his biggest win being a two-round stoppage of former **Mike Tyson** conqueror **Danny Williams**.

Nonito Donaire is scheduled to fight **Fernando Montiel** next February, but, in between then and now, he'll face former WBA titlist **Wladimir Sidorenko** on December 4 at the Honda Center in Anaheim, California. The bout is part of the **Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.-Alfonso Gomez** pay-per-view card, but it's the type of fight that could steal the whole show ... That same night, young **Saul Alvarez** takes on a very tough assignment in Cancun, Mexico, when he meets 39-year-old veteran **Lovemore N'Dou** … **Victor Ortiz** will also be stepping up in competition when he meets slick-boxing **Lamont Peterson** on the Khan-Maidana undercard. ■

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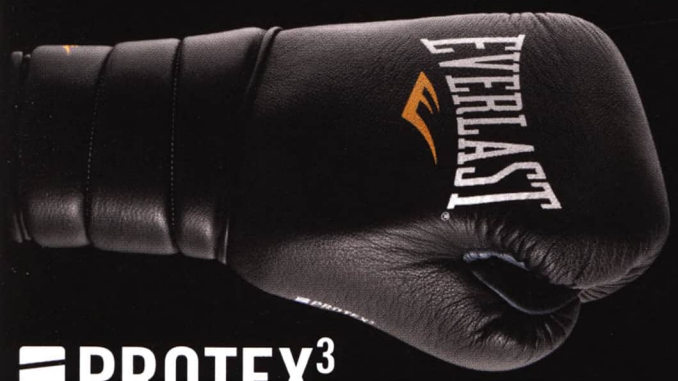

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